

# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS AND THE GYPSIES; OR, A WONDERFUL SURPRISE. *By HARRY MOORE.*



The Hessians led the mules, on the backs of which the three "Liberty Boys" were tied, and as they came opposite to the gypsies' camp, were given a wonderful surprise. Up from among the bushes rose a dozen gypsies.



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## THE LIBERTY BOYS AND THE GYPSIES;

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## A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE ENGLISHMAN AND THE GYPSY MAIDEN.

Three men were walking along a road leading westward in central New York one afternoon in August of the year 1779.

The three were bearded, had long hair and bronzed faces; they were dressed roughly, in blue homespun, with coonskin caps on their heads and carrying long rifles in their hands.

The road wound this way and that through the timber, and it was an impossibility to see ahead very far.

"Say, I sh'd think we'd fin' Johnson's army somewhars in this part uv ther country," said one.

"I sh'd think so," from another.

"Yas, er mebbly ther army uv one or both uv ther Butlers," from a third.

"Yas, er Brant's force uv Injuns."

"We don't wanter git mixed up with enny Injuns," said one; "I don't trust 'em no more'n I would er snake. Er feller would jest ez like's not wake up some mornin' with his skulp missin'."

"That's so; I don't wanter jine Brant's Injun force."

"Waal, et won't be necessary, I reckon," from the first speaker; "thar air three forces uv white loyalists, an' I guess we'll run ercrest one uv 'em afore long."

At the time of which we write the entire region of central New York was overrun by Tories and Indians, the former in three bands, under Johnson and the Butler brothers, and the latter under Thayendanagea, otherwise known as Brant.

On the 10th day of November, of the year 1776, these

forces, combined, had fallen upon the peaceful and beautiful village of Cherry Valley, and more than fifty men, women and children had been ruthlessly killed. This dire affair, known as the Massacre of Cherry Valley, had caused the blood of people everywhere to run cold with horror, and Congress had been importuned to send a force of patriot soldiers out into that region to strike the Tories and Indians a blow.

It had not been practicable to do this at that time, or, indeed, till late in the summer of the next year, 1779, when, in the month of August, a force under General Sullivan was making its way westward.

But to return to the three Tories: They rounded a bend in the road and suddenly came upon a man and a horse by the roadside. The man was quite well dressed, was about fifty years of age and was good-looking, with keen, gray eyes, and beard worn English fashion.

He was seated on a rock looking at a sheet of paper, and near him the horse was grazing on the grass.

"Hello, whut hev we got heer?" said one of the Tories in a low voice.

"I kain't tell ye," from another.

"Look like an Englishman," said the third.

"Yas, so he does; I wonder whut he's doin' in these parts?"

"Dunno; let's ax 'im."

The three approached the man and were close to him before he knew of their coming. He looked up with a start and exclaimed:

"Ah, gentlemen, how are you?"

"Purty well, thank you; but I am puzzled regarding my whereabouts. I have been trying to locate the spot on this map. Can you gentlemen help me out in this?"



The three had come to a stop in front of the man, and they looked dubiously at the paper which he held up in front of them. On this paper a rude map was drawn.

"We don' know much erbout maps an' things," said the leader of the three; "but ef ye'll tell us whur ye wanten go we'll tell ye whether ye air ennywhurs clust ter ther place."

"I wish to go to Tioga."

"Oh, ter Tioga, hey?"

"Yes; do you know where the place is?"

"I reckon I do; Tioga is erbout twenty miles frum heer."

"In a westerly direction, I suppose?"

"Yas. Jest keep on goin' in ther diraskshun ye hev be'n goin' an' ye'll git thar."

"I am much obliged for the information."

"Oh, ye're welcum; but, stranger, ef et hain't axin' too much, wull ye tell us whut ye air doin' erway out in this part uv ther country?"

"I have no objections to telling you," was the reply. "I have come out here from New York, where I landed from England a month ago, to look for a family who live—or did live—at or near Tioga."

"Whut is ther name uv ther fambly?"

"The man's name is Enoch Sanderson."

The three looked thoughtful, while the man watched them eagerly, and then they shook their heads.

"I don't know ennybuddy by thet name," said one.

"Nur me," from another.

"I've never heerd ther name berfore," said the third.

The Englishman, for such he was, looked disappointed.

"I was in hopes that you would say you knew him," he said.

"No, never heerd tell uv 'im."

Then the speaker added:

"Whut mought yer name be, stranger?"

"Royal Ambrose."

"I s'pose thet, seein' ez how ye air jest frum England, ye air er loyalist, Mister Ambrose?"

"Oh, yes; I am loyal to my king."

"Thet's good; so air we."

"I am glad to hear it, and now, if you men are journeying to Tioga, I would like to accompany you."

"Ye're welcum, but ye hev er hoss, while we're erfoot, an' we'll move slower 'n whut ye like, I 'xpeck."

"'Slow and sure' is a good motto; I would rather go slowly and be sure of my way than to go faster and get lost and lose a lot of time, and be worried besides."

"Waal, yer welcum ter come erlong with us."

Royal Ambrose folded up the paper he had been looking at and placed it in his pocket.

"If I am to travel in your company it will be more satisfactory if I know your names," he said.

"My name," said the leader, "is Jack Jennings; this feller is Hugh Hudson, an' this one Sam Spencer."

"Thanks," said Ambrose; "now we know one another."

He got up, walked to his horse, took the animal by the halter-strap and said to the Tories:

"I am ready to go."

They set out, the Englishman walking and leading his horse.

The three would have liked to have questioned their companion further regarding the business that had brought him from England, in the first place, and had then led him deep into the wilderness of central New York, but there was a peculiar air about the man that forbade their taking liberties.

So they engaged him in conversation on subjects that were not personal, and the conversation went on pleasantly enough.

Presently, on rounding a bend in the road, they came upon a young woman seated on a rock by the roadside.

As they drew nearer they saw the girl was not more than seventeen or eighteen, and they noted also that, although browned by exposure to sun and wind to almost the hue of an Indian, she was very pretty. She was dressed in a peculiar, gypsyish costume, which set off her beauty and gave her an attractive appearance, indeed.

"Hello, whut hev we heer?" said Jennings, who was the leading spirit of the three Tories.

"Looks like er gypsy gal," said Hudson.

"Thet's jest whut she is," from Spencer.

"A gypsy, eh?" remarked Ambrose; "yes, so she is. I have not seen a gypsy in years. There used to be some on the lands of my father in the south of England when I was a boy, and, indeed, for many years after I became owner of the estate, but they disappeared and that was the last time I saw a gypsy, from that time till this."

They were almost to the girl now, and as they approached she rose, and, with a little courtesy, said:

"Will the gentlemen have their fortunes told?"

"I don' think I keer ter hev mine told," grinned Jennings.

"I'd ruther not know whut's goin' ter happen ter me," said Hudson.

"Thet's ther way et is with me," from Spencer.

"I tell things that have happened in the past as well as what is to happen in the future," said the girl.

Royal Ambrose had not spoken as yet. He was staring at the girl with a peculiar, puzzled look in his eyes. She turned toward him now and said:

"How is it with you, sir? Shall I tell your fortune?"

The Englishman gave a start as though suddenly aroused from sleep and said:

"I might have my fortune told, miss. I fear that in me you have found one who is skeptical regarding the powers of any human to foretell coming events, however."

"Oh, very few people believe in this, sir; but I assure you that I can convince you that I am one who can do so."

The Englishman looked at the girl doubtingly.

"Do that and this gold-piece is yours," he said, drawing a guinea from his pocket and holding it up to view.



"How shall I convince you, by telling you something of your past?" the girl asked.

"Yes; that will be as good a way as any; if you can do that, then I shall be forced to believe."

"Let me see your hand," said the gypsy maiden.

The Englishman extended his hand and the girl took hold of it and gazed at the palm long and earnestly.

"You have recently taken a long trip," the girl said, presently; "yes, you have crossed the big waters, the ocean."

She looked more closely at the hand, and was silent a few moments, during which time the three Tories gazed at their companion with surprise depicted on their countenances. Mr. Ambrose himself looked somewhat surprised.

"You are an Englishman," the gypsy maiden went on; "you have come to America on some kind of a quest, just what it is I cannot make out; but I think—yes, I am sure—that—that—I can—tell you—your—name."

The last words came slowly and hesitatingly.

The three Tories looked interested, and the Englishman looked skeptical.

"Go ahead," he said; "tell me my name."

"Very well; it—is—Royal Ambrose."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE GYPSY MAIDEN'S PERIL.

The four men exchanged looks of amazement and wonder.

Royal Ambrose himself was perhaps the most amazed. He gazed at her in wonder.

"How did you learn my name?" he asked, presently.

The gypsy maiden looked up quickly.

"Then I am right," she remarked; "that is your name?"

"Yes; but how did you know it?"

The girl shook her head and a dreamy expression stole over her face.

"I don't know how I knew it," she said; "I simply gave you the name that came into my mind. I do that often, and I am always right."

The three Tories stared and the Englishman shook his head in a puzzled manner.

"I cannot understand it," he said.

"Shall I tell you of the future?" the girl asked.

"Yes; go ahead."

The girl again looked at the palm of the man's hand for some time in silence, and then said, slowly:

"You will not be successful in your quest; you will meet with disappointment, and it will be best that you abandon your expedition and return to England at once. It will be dangerous for you to remain. Danger lurks in your path at every step."

Royal Ambrose shook his head, as much as to say he would not abandon his quest.

"Can you tell me why I have come to this country?" he asked.

The girl looked at the palm attentively, wrinkled her forehead in a thoughtful manner and then shook her head.

"The lines do not tell me that," she said.

The Englishman drew his hand away and gave the girl the gold-piece.

"You have earned it," he said.

"Thank you, sir."

Royal Ambrose looked at the gypsy maiden with interest and said:

"You speak good English; how does that happen, when you are a fortuneteller?"

"I have had a good teacher," was the reply.

"Ah, indeed? Who is the teacher?"

"My mother."

"Where is she?"

"At our camp, over in the timber," with a wave of the hand.

"Humph. How happens it that she is capable of teaching you?"

The girl shook her head.

"I cannot tell you," she said.

Royal Ambrose was silent a few moments, and then said:

"I would like to see your mother. Is it far to your camp?"

"A mile; but it would be useless for you to go there; she would not see you."

"She would not?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"She will not see anyone who comes from England."

"She will not?"

"No; she will not tell fortunes for British soldiers, of whom there have been many coming through this part of the country lately, and she has given orders that no one of English blood shall be admitted to her presence."

"That seems strange; then, I suppose she must be in authority among your people?"

"She is the queen of the gypsies, sir."

"Well, if she wouldn't see me there can be no use of my going to your encampment."

"You are right, sir."

After a little further conversation the Englishman bade the girl goodby in a courteous manner, and the three Tories said goodby also, the maiden nodding and smiling in response. Then the four walked onward.

They glanced back as they came to another bend in the road and saw the girl sitting on the rock, where she had been when they first put in an appearance.

"Say, thet wuz kinder queer ther way ther gal tole ye who ye wuz an' whar ye wuz frum, an' ever'thin'," said Jennings, turning and looking at the Englishman.



Royal Ambrose nodded, a thoughtful look on his face.

"Yes, it is rather strange," he agreed; "I don't understand it. So far as I know, and to the best of my belief, no one in this part of the country knows me, or that such a person lives and is in America."

"Thet makes et mighty queer," said Hudson.

There was a thoughtful look on the Englishman's face; he answered such questions as the three asked, but it was plain that his thoughts were otherwise employed.

The four had scarcely more than disappeared around the bend before a woman of perhaps forty-five years stepped out from behind a tree and approached the girl.

The woman in question was dark and gypsyish-looking, but had evidently been good-looking in her younger days. She was dressed in the fantastic fashion common to gypsies, but her costume was made up of good material.

The girl looked around.

"Ah, it is you, mother?" she said. "Did you hear my conversation with the stranger?"

"Yes, Madge."

"Did I carry out your instructions rightly?"

"Yes. You did well, but your warning did not seem to have any effect." There was a troubled look on the woman's face.

"No; he did not seem to be much impressed."

"And he wished to see me, did he not?" The troubled look deepened.

"Yes, mother; did I do right in telling him you would not see him?"

"Yes, Madge; I did not wish to see him."

The girl looked at her mother for a few moments in silence and then said

"Mother, tell me how it happens that you knew this man when you saw him sitting by the roadside down the road awhile ago?"

The woman shook her head.

"I will tell you sometime, Madge," she said; "but not now."

The girl was shrewd, however, and somewhat inquisitive, and she asked:

"Mother, were you ever in England?"

The woman nodded.

"That is a self-evident fact," she said; "else I would not have known this Englishman; but I do not wish to talk about the matter, Madge."

"Very well; here is the gold-piece he gave me," and she handed the money to the woman.

With an exclamation of rage the gypsy woman threw the gold-piece from her; her face was not good to look upon, it was so distorted by passion.

"I don't want his gold!" she cried; "it burnt my hand! No, no! No gold of his shall ever cross my palm. I hate him! I hate him!"

Madge looked at her mother in amazement and then asked:

"Why do you hate him, mother?"

"Don't ask me, Madge," was the reply. "I do not wish to talk about it."

The girl walked over in the direction in which her mother had thrown the gold-piece and began looking around.

"I'll keep the money, mother, if I can find it," she said; "it won't burn my hand."

"Let it go, Madge; don't look for it," the woman said; "let it go; we don't want any of his gold."

"I do," with a nod of the head; "I could buy so much that I would like to have, mother, and his gold is as good for that purpose as anybody's."

"No, no; his gold is not good; it will bring bad luck; let it lie where it fell, Madge."

But the girl kept on looking, and presently gave utterance to a little cry of delight and picked up the gold-piece.

"Here it is, mother," she said; "and I think it will bring me good luck, if anything."

"No, no, Madge; not good luck, child. Throw it away."

But the girl had a will of her own, and, shaking her head and smiling, she said:

"I am going to keep it, and I am not at all afraid of it bringing me bad luck."

She placed it in her pocket and went back and sat down on the rock.

There was a thoughtful look on her face, and it was evident that the events of the last hour had made considerable impression on her mind.

She looked at her mother, who was leaning against a tree, a far-away look in her eyes.

"I have learned something," she said to herself; "mother has been in England, and her life there must have been an unpleasant one; that is the reason she has always refused to see English soldiers. She knows this stranger, Royal Ambrose, and it must be that he has wronged her in some manner, for she hates him, else she would not have thrown the money away that he gave me."

The girl thought long and hard, but could not figure the matter out. Neither did she think of asking any questions, for she knew by experience that if her mother did not wish to be questioned it was best not to do so.

"I guess I will go back to the camp, Madge," said her mother, presently; "you had better come before long."

"Very well; I will wait awhile and see if I can get another customer. I would like to tell fortunes all day long at a guinea each."

"Queen Elsie," as she was called by her gypsy companions, turned and walked away, quickly disappearing in the timber.

Madge looked after her a few moments and then murmured:

"Mother has been in England! I wonder if I was born there?"

Of course, there was no one there to answer the question, and the girl was silent, gazing at the ground.

The rock on which she was seated was an elongated one; Madge sat on one end, facing toward the road, and



the rock extended back toward the timber a distance of six or seven feet.

Presently a snake crawled up on the end of the rock that was toward the timber, and went gliding along toward the point where the girl was sitting, motionless.

The snake was a copperhead, one of the most dangerous and deadly of serpents, and the girl little knew the peril she was in.

The snake advanced till it was within a foot of the girl and then stopped. It was a large snake of the kind, being more than two feet long and large in proportion.

Suddenly the girl uttered a sigh and made a movement.

The instant she did so the copperhead drew back to strike.

In another instant the gypsy maiden would have been struck by the fangs of the poisonous serpent, but at this instant there was the sharp crack of a pistol, and the snake's head went flying through the air, while its body went writhing and twisting down the side of the rock to the ground, where it continued this performance.

With a sharp cry of alarm Madge leaped up and turned quickly, to see a handsome youth of nineteen years standing nearby, a smoking pistol in his hand.

"Why did you shoot at me?" Madge cried.

The young man looked surprised, and then smiling in a peculiar manner said:

"I did not shoot at you."

"What did you shoot at, then?"

The young stranger strode forward and pointed at the writhing body of the serpent, which up to that moment had escaped the girl's notice.

"That," he said, laconically.

"A copperhead!" cried Madge; "oh, horrors!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### DICK SLATER SAVES MADGE'S LIFE.

"Yes, a copperhead," said the youth, quietly; "and it would have bitten you had I not shot its head off."

"Ugh!" with a shudder.

"It was just ready to strike when I fired, and had I not been a dead shot, you would most certainly have been bitten."

"You have saved my life, sir; you have saved me from a most horrible death, and I thank you!" said Madge, earnestly.

"I am glad that I was here to save you," said the youth, quietly.

"You must come with me, so that my mother and the rest of our people may thank you," said Madge.

"Where is your mother and the rest of your people?"

"Our camp is about a mile distant."

"Your camp?" with an inquiring look.

"Yes; I am—we are—gypsies, you know." It was plain

that it was hard for the girl to say this. She did not seem to like to acknowledge the fact to the handsome young stranger.

"Ah, so you are a gypsy?" the young man remarked; "and I suppose you tell fortunes, and all that?"

"Yes, sir; I will tell yours for nothing, if you wish."

The youth smiled.

"It may not be courteous," he said; "but I must say that I have but little faith in fortunetelling."

"And still less in fortunetellers?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that with such a fair member of the profession before me." Then he added: "I think I will accompany you to your encampment—but not to be thanked, as you suggested. I have always had a curiosity to see a real gypsy camp, and this is an opportunity I cannot afford to neglect."

"Come," said the girl, eagerly. It seemed as though she was afraid he might change his mind.

She led the way into the timber, the young man keeping beside her.

"My horse is tied back there," he said; "I suppose no one will steal him."

Madge paused.

"Perhaps you had better bring your horse along," she said; "it won't be much trouble."

"Very well; I won't be long."

He hastened back and soon returned, leading a magnificent black horse, with the unmistakable marks of the thoroughbred in his clean limbs and glossy hide.

"What a splendid horse!" exclaimed Madge, and she patted the animal on the neck.

"Yes, he is a fine horse," was the reply.

"What is his name?"

"Major."

"Ah, that is a good name." Then she again patted the horse on the neck, and he whinnied as though well pleased.

They walked onward, and presently the girl said:

"I have learned the name of your horse before learning your name. Will you tell me what it is?"

"Certainly; my name is Dick Slater."

The girl had never heard of Dick Slater, so did not show any signs of surprise.

He was the famous scout, spy and captain of the Liberty Boys of '76.

He and his company of youths, all his own age, had come to this part of the country with a force of patriot soldiers under the command of General Sullivan.

They had been sent by General Washington to lay waste the country of the hostile Iroquois Indians and to go as far west as Fort Niagara and capture the Tory forces under Johnson and the Butlers.

Dick and the Liberty Boys had been asked for by General Sullivan, for he knew they were valuable allies in warfare such as he was bent on waging. They were skilled in woodcraft, were brave to rashness, and were desperate fighters—just the kind of men to have in the



front ranks, to stay the advance of the enemy and give the rest of the patriot soldiers courage.

Then, too, Dick and two or three of his comrades were expert scouts and spies, and Dick especially had made himself famous in this respect. Thus they would be of great value to the expedition, for they could go ahead and keep the general informed thoroughly regarding the enemy.

Dick was now five miles in advance of the army, and was on a scouting expedition. He was eager to learn whether there were any Tories or hostile Indians, or both, between that point and Tioga, and his purpose in going to the gypsy encampment was so that he would have a chance to question some of them. He knew they moved about a great deal, and that if there were Tories or Indians in the vicinity the gypsies would likely know of the fact.

He could have questioned the girl, but he felt that it was likely that she would not know anything about the matter, as she was at the encampment most of the time, and would not be far away from it.

The army had not come to central New York in one body. The right wing, consisting of 2,500 soldiers, had marched up the valley of the Mohawk as far as Canajoharie, and then had turned southwest toward Tioga; this portion of the army was under the command of General James Clinton, the other portion, which was coming up the Susquehanna, was under General Sullivan; but he was the officer in command of the whole, of course, and would take full command as soon as the two forces came together, which they were to do at Tioga.

Dick and the Liberty Boys, as has been said, were with General Sullivan's division.

Of course, Dick did not tell the gypsy maiden who or what he was. He let her think he was a traveler, simply riding through the country.

They were not more than fifteen minutes walking to the gypsy encampment, and as they approached half a dozen dogs came rushing toward them, barking at a great rate. When the girl spoke to the brutes, however, they turned and slunk back.

It was quite a good-sized encampment, there being at least a score of tents, and three or four wagons with covers on. There was also a wagon that was covered with clapboards, like a small house on wheels. The girl pointed this out and said:

"That is my home; mother and I live in that wagon."

"I should judge that you would be comfortable," was the reply.

All around, seated on blankets spread on the ground, were men, women and children—swarthy and sinister-looking, the majority of them.

They eyed the youth keenly and curiously, he noted, and it was plain that they were surprised to see him in company with the girl.

They passed near where a young gypsy of about Dick's age was standing leaning against a tree. Madge smiled and said, "How do you do, Rollo?" but he merely nodded

and said nothing. His dark, fierce-looking eyes were meeting Dick, and a frown came over his face.

"Who is the white-faced youth with Madge?" he almost hissed; "and how comes it he is with her, I wonder? I know it is just the kind of fellow to win the heart of a foolish girl like Madge, and likely that is what he intends doing. But he had better not try it!" with a still deeper frown; "if anything comes between me and Madge, his life will pay the forfeit;" and his hand stole to the handle of a knife that was in his belt.

This youth, whom the girl had addressed as "Rollo," had made love to the girl, but she had not given him any encouragement. Indeed, she disliked him, and did all she could to discourage him. She had often told him she could never care for him.

Nevertheless, he thought that she must look upon him with favor sooner or later, and had not given up hope; but her appearance at this time, with a handsome young stranger accompanying her, made him very angry and jealous.

He watched the two with a baleful look, till the youth had tied his horse and entered the queen's wagon in company with Madge, and then he strolled over in that direction along with several of the swarthy, evil-looking men who were going there to get a nearer look at the horse.

All were good judges of horses, and had instantly noted the fact that Major was a wonderfully fine animal.

"That's the purtiest hoss I ever seen," said one, looking at Major admiringly.

"Ye're right," from another; "that's er thurrerbred hoss."

"I'll bet he kin run like er streak uv lightnin'," from another.

"That's whut I'll bet, too," from still another; "I'd like ter see 'im run."

They examined the horse as carefully as was possible from a respectful distance; they did not dare to get too near his heels, for he manifested a disposition to kick.

"Rollo" stood near watching the horse and listening to the remarks of his companions. There was a thoughtful look on his face, and it was evident that he was pondering something.

Presently he beckoned to another youth of about his own age and the two moved away till they were out of sight of the encampment.

They talked together for quite awhile, and every few minutes Rollo would step to the edge of the encampment and look to see whether the horse was still tied near the queen's wagon.

Presently they came to some kind of an understanding, and both re-entered the camp and moved about, stopping to speak to a youth of about their own age occasionally.

Then they went back into the edge of the timber, and six of the youths they had spoken to followed them.

The eight talked earnestly together and then returned to the encampment. There was a group standing near the horse admiring him, and just as Rollo appeared Dick



me down the steps leading from the door of the wagon-house to the ground, and after him came Madge and her mother.

Queen Elsie had a stick in her hand, and she struck it against the steps and called to the gypsies to attract their attention.

All came crowding forward, and then the queen told them that the young man they saw before them had shot the head off of a copperhead snake that was about to bite Madge, thus saving her life; and she went on and ordered that all should be ready to render the young man any aid that he might require.

"He wishes to ask you some questions," she added; "and I command that you answer them to the best of your ability. Remember, it is the same as though I myself were asking."

The gypsies looked at Dick curiously, and said they would answer any questions he might wish to ask.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A JEALOUS GYPSY YOUTH.

"What I wish to ask," said Dick, "is this: Do any of you know whether there are any large parties of Tories or Indians in this part of the country?"

The gypsies all said they knew of no such parties.

"I don't think there are any such parties around here," said one, and the others all coincided with this statement.

"Very well," said Dick; "I am much obliged to you." Then he held out his hand to Queen Elsie, with the words:

"I will go now. Goodby."

"Goodby," was the reply, and she shook his hand.

Then Dick shook hands with Madge and said goodby. This done, he untied his horse, led him to the edge of the encampment, and, mounting, rode away.

He was not long in reaching the road, and then he headed toward the west.

He had not gone more than half a mile, when suddenly he was given a surprise. Eight swarthy-faced youths of about his own age leaped out from among the trees, and while two seized the bridle-reins, the others seized Dick and pulled him out of the saddle.

Dick struggled, but unavailingly.

The young rascals were strong and wiry, and he was powerless in their hands.

The leader of the band was Rollo, and he said to Dick: "You have just come from the gypsy camp, haven't you?"

"You know I have," replied Dick, quietly; "you saw me there, even as I saw you."

"You are right," fiercely; "I saw you there. I saw you enter the camp in company with Madge. Now I want to know where you found Madge."

Dick eyed the young gypsy keenly, and then a look of understanding appeared on his face.

"Ah, so that's the trouble, is it?" he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that you are angry because I entered the camp in company with Madge."

"Yes, that is the trouble," with a nod; "Madge is to be my wife, and I don't like strangers to come around and try to get her away from me."

"You need not have any fears, so far as I am concerned; our meeting was wholly accidental, and I am merely traveling through the country. I shall probably never see her again."

Rollo eyed Dick searchingly.

"Is that the truth?" he asked.

"It is."

Rollo was silent a few moments and then he said:

"Where are you going?"

"To Tioga."

"You are telling the truth?" dubiously.

"Of course."

"Very well; then we will let you go, but I tell you this, that if you come back to our encampment, on any excuse whatever, it will be a bad thing for you."

"What would you do?" asked Dick.

"I don't know; but it would be something that you wouldn't like."

This was said viciously, and a look at the fellow's face was sufficient to prove to Dick that the young gypsy was capable of almost anything.

"If you will release me and let me go on my way I will be much obliged," said Dick.

Rollo hesitated and then said to the youths who were holding Dick:

"Let him go."

They hesitated, and one growled out:

"Whut air we goin' ter git out uv this? I thort we wuz ter hev all ther munny we foun' on this feller."

Rollo looked undecided.

"I think that we had better let him go without taking his money," he said.

"I think so, too," said Dick, quietly; "if you were to rob me I would go straight back to the encampment and tell Queen Elsie, and then it would go hard with you, I judge."

The young rascals looked blank at this.

Then they let go of him without a word.

"That is sensible," said Dick; "I will go on my way now."

He stepped to his horse and climbed into the saddle.

The two who had been holding to the bridle reins let go and stepped back.

Without a word Dick rode away, and on looking back at the first bend in the road he saw the eight youths standing in the road talking and gesticulating.

"That young rascal's companions are not satisfied," said Dick to himself. "They helped him, with the ex-



pectation of getting something for their pains, but were disappointed."

On Dick rode at a gallop. He had lost considerable time and wished to make up for it.

Presently he came to the top of a high hill, and here he paused and looked all around.

Nowhere could he see any signs of enemies. If there were any large parties of Tories or Indians in the vicinity they were under cover.

Dick glanced up at the sun.

"It will be time to go into camp when I get back to the army," he said to himself; "so I will go back at once."

He turned his horse's head and rode back in the direction from which he had just come.

He had forgotten all about Rollo and his seven companion gypsy youths, and was riding along at a gallop, when suddenly out into the road leaped the little gypsy band, and again Dick was pulled out of the saddle in a twinkling.

"I thought you said you were going to Tioga," said Rollo, his face dark with jealous anger.

"I am," said Dick.

"You lie, you dog! Tioga is in the other direction, and you know it."

"I didn't say how soon I was going there," said Dick.

"I know what you are after," said Rollo; "you have fallen in love with Madge, and are on your way back to our encampment."

"You are mistaken," quietly.

"I am not; I know! You saved her life by shooting the head off the copperhead, and you are going to go to the camp because you know you will be welcome, and you will try to win Madge away from me."

"I give you my word that I have no intention of returning to your encampment."

"Bah! You gave me your word that you would go on to Tioga, and here you are back again."

"I am going back to rejoin my army."

The gypsy youths looked surprised and then skeptical.

"What army?" asked Rollo.

"The patriot army."

"Where is it?"

"I expect to find it about a mile east of where your encampment is."

Rollo shook his head, as did his comrades.

"I don't believe you belong to any army," he said.

The others nodded to show that they coincided with this view of the matter.

"You are mistaken," said Dick; "and the best thing you can do is to set me free."

"I won't do it," Rollo insisted; "you lied to me, and now I will not believe anything you say."

"If you don't set me free I will make you wish that you had done so," said Dick, calmly and decidedly.

Rollo snapped his fingers.

"That for you," he said, with contempt in his tones and air; "boys, what shall we do with the liar?"

The others shook their heads.

"Set me free," said Dick.

Rollo paid no attention, but looked thoughtful.

"I know what we will do," he said, presently; "take his belt."

One of the gypsy youths obeyed.

"Now strap his arms together behind his back."

This was done, and Dick's four pistols which were four in the belt were distributed among the youths.

"Now bring him along," said Rollo; "and bring the horse, too."

He led the way into the timber, the others following with Dick in their midst, and one bringing up the rear leading the horse.

They penetrated into the timber a distance of half mile, and then Rollo paused in front of a large, hollow tree.

"Now search him and take all his money away from him," the young gypsy ordered.

His companions obeyed this command with alacrity.

They felt in Dick's pockets, and soon had found all his money, which was not a great deal, but it was sufficient to make the young robbers feel that their work had not been in vain.

"Now tie his legs," ordered Rollo.

"What is that for?" asked Dick.

"You will soon know."

The youths tied Dick's ankles with two big cotton handkerchiefs tied together and then looked inquiringly at Rollo.

He pointed to the hollow tree.

"In there with him," he said.

The others hesitated.

"He will yell an' soon bring sumbuddy here," said one.

"That's so; I never thought of that."

"What do you mean to do, leave me here to starve to death?" asked Dick.

"Maybe so," was the cool reply. It was plain that Rollo was a cold-blooded young villain and capable of almost any crime.

"You had better kill me outright," said Dick, sternly. "I give you fair warning that if you leave me here to suffer torture and I succeed in escaping with my life, I will make it my business to settle with you, with interest!"

The young gypsy shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. He made a gesture toward the hole in the side of the hollow tree, and his companions lifted Dick and pushed him through the opening—this after having gagged him, so that he could not cry out, had he wished to do so.

"There," said Rollo, peering in at the Liberty Boy, "you will have time to think how foolish you were in trying to win Madge away from me."

Of course, Dick could not reply, but he gave the young gypsy a look that made him flinch in spite of himself.

He turned away from the hole in the tree with a shrug of the shoulders, and said to his companions:



"We will go now."

"Whut erbout the hoss?" asked one.

"It is a fine animal," the youth said; "but we would not take it to camp. Queen Elsie and Madge would know we had done something to the horse's owner and would give us fits."

"Shall we tie ther hoss ter er tree?"

"No; let him run loose, and then if he should wander over toward our camp we will not be suspected."

"Thet's so."

Then they walked away in the direction of their encampment.

## CHAPTER V.

### DICK IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

Dick Slater was indeed in a dangerous situation.

He was bound and gagged and concealed in a hollow tree deep in the timber, where it was not likely that anybody would pass by.

He could not free himself and he could not even cry out for help.

All he could do was to lie there, silent and practically motionless.

It was indeed a terrible situation.

If help did not come he would starve to death.

Slowly the minutes passed. Each one seemed like an hour to Dick.

He was far from feeling comfortable, for the strap had been drawn so tight it cut into the wrists.

Presently Major came and stuck his nose in through the opening in the side of the hollow tree and whinnied.

Of course, Dick was unable to say anything, and this seemed to puzzle the animal, for he waited a few moments, then whinnied again and moved away a short distance.

One hour, two hours passed, and it was now nearing evening.

Suddenly Dick heard the sound of footsteps, and then a voice exclaimed:

"Hello, here's a horse!"

"Yes, and bridled and saddled," from another speaker.

"And loose," from a third.

"That is strange," from a fourth speaker; "I wonder where the owner of the horse is?"

"That is the question."

"Let's look around; the horse may have thrown him, and in that case we may find him lying dead or unconscious somewhere around."

"Say, that's a fine animal!" in the voice of the first speaker.

"So it is; but look around for the owner."

Dick heard the strangers moving about, and, although he could not cry out, he felt confident that he could attract their attention.

He rolled over and managed to get out through the opening with his feet.

This attracted the attention of the strangers at once, and one called out:

"Hello, what have we here?"

There was the sound of footsteps, and then several hands seized Dick and drew him out through the opening.

He looked at his rescuers curiously. One glance was sufficient to tell him what they were. They were dressed in the scarlet uniform of the British soldier, and such they were, without a doubt.

There were four of the redcoats, and they stared at Dick with wondering looks.

"Who are you?" asked one, who seemed to be the leading spirit among them.

Dick did not think he would be known by name in this far western part of the country, but at the same time he decided that it would be as well to exercise caution, so he did not give his own name, but when the gag was removed said that his name was Luke Larkins.

"Luke Larkins, eh?"

"Yes."

"Who tied you up in this fashion?"

"Some robbers."

"What is that? Robbers you say?"

"Yes."

"What did they rob you of?"

"My money."

"How many of them were there?"

"Eight."

"What sort of fellows—in appearance, I mean?"

Dick did not wish to set the redcoats on the right track, for if they should go to the gypsy encampment they might learn that he had given them a false name, as he had told the gypsies his name was Dick Slater. So now he simply stated that the robbers were rough-looking, roughly-dressed men.

"I wonder why they didn't take your horse?"

Dick shook his head and said he did not know.

Then he said:

"Will you kindly free me of these bonds?"

One of the redcoats cut the handkerchiefs binding his ankles, and then two of them assisted the youth to rise to his feet; but they did not free his arms.

"Now free my arms, please," said Dick.

The leader of the party shook his head.

"We cannot do that," he said.

"Why not?" asked Dick.

"Because, in my opinion, you are a suspicious character."

"A suspicious character! In what way?"

"Well, it is possible that you may be a rebel scout and spy."

Dick shook his head and looked surprised, simulating it very successfully.



"I am not a rebel at all," he said; "much less a rebel spy."

"You are loyal to the king?"

"Yes."

"Well, it won't hurt you to be taken to my commanding officer at our encampment. If he is willing to let you go, then it will be all right; but I am not willing to take the responsibility upon myself."

"That is too bad," said Dick; "I am sorry, for I have already been delayed by the robbers, and now this will throw me back still more."

"Where are you bound for?"

"Tioga."

"Well, it is only a mile to our encampment, and it is in the direction you wish to go; so it will not be out of your way. If my commanding officer wishes to let you go it will be all right."

Dick saw it would do no good to remonstrate, so said no more. The leader told two of the men to take hold of Dick's arms and lead him along, and they did so, the third one leading the horse.

They moved slowly, for the redcoats did not seem to be very familiar with the way, and it was nearly half an hour before they arrived at the British encampment.

Dick was taken to the tent occupied by the commanding officer, a colonel, at once.

The officer eyed Dick searchingly, and then looked at the four redcoats who had brought him in an inquiring manner.

"Who have you there?" he asked.

"He says his name is Luke Larkins, sir," said the leader of the party.

"And why have you brought him here a prisoner?"

"I thought you would wish us to do so, sir; we got hold of him in a peculiar manner."

"How is that? Explain."

The redcoat did so, the officer listening with interest.

Then he asked Dick a number of questions regarding the affair.

The youth answered readily enough, and told the same story he had told in the first place.

When he had finished asking Dick questions the officer was silent and thoughtful for quite awhile.

Then he looked at Dick and said:

"I think I shall have to hold you prisoner a day or so, young man."

Dick was disappointed. He had hoped that he would be set free and permitted to go his own way.

"I assure you, sir," he said, "that I am not a rebel spy. If you keep me here you will be doing me a great injustice, for I have an appointment to meet some men at Tioga at a certain time, and I wish to be there."

The officer shook his head.

"I am sorry," he said; "but I must do my duty as an officer in the king's army. You may be a rebel spy, and I must hold you prisoner till I know that such is or is not the case."

The Liberty Boy knew it would be useless to remonstrate, so said no more.

"Take the prisoner out and have him kept under guard constantly," the officer ordered.

The four redcoats obeyed, and a few minutes later Dick was sitting near the center of the encampment, while around him were redcoats and Hessians—the force being made up about half and half of redcoats and Hessians.

There were a number of campfires, and the soldiers were busy cooking their suppers.

The smell of the coffee and bacon made Dick very hungry, and he was glad when one of the soldiers brought him some food on a tin plate.

While he was eating his ankles were strapped together, his arms having been freed, so that he could feed himself.

When he had eaten all he wished, Dick felt strong and ready to make a desperate attempt to escape, if the opportunity presented itself.

The redcoat who had brought him his supper now strapped his arms together behind his back and freed his legs.

Dick managed this time to hold his wrists in such a manner that they were not tightly bound; he even believed that by dint of hard labor he might be able to get his wrists free.

"If I can do that I may be able to escape to-night," he told himself.

Then he began taking observations.

He sized up the number of men in the British force carefully.

"There must be a thousand," he told himself; "I wish I knew where they are going and what they are doing in this part of the country."

He knew it would be useless to ask questions, however, so did not do so.

He listened to all the talk indulged in by the soldiers around him, however, and he picked up some information in this manner. Doubtless the soldiers thought it would be impossible for the prisoner to escape, and they were careless enough to talk about their intended movements; in this manner Dick learned that the force was headed for Tioga.

He was glad to learn this, for it had been his idea that the British were headed eastward, in which event their scouts would learn of the presence of the patriot army in the vicinity.

"If they march westward in the morning," thought Dick, "it will give us a chance to overtake and surround and capture them."

The thing for him to do was to make his escape.

If he could do that and could get back to his army in safety all would be well.

He wished that the hours would roll away faster; it would not do to try to leave the encampment until after midnight, for the soldiers would not all be asleep before that time.

Slowly the hours rolled away.



The soldiers rolled themselves in their blankets and down and went to sleep. Dick was given a blanket—rather, one was spread near him—and he lay down on it, and pretended to go to sleep.

He was never more wide awake, however.

Presently he began working at the strap that bound his wrists.

"The first thing to do is to get that off," he told himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ESCAPE.

There were two soldiers on guard over Dick.

It was evident that they thought guarding the prisoner unnecessary thing to do, however, for they did not pay much attention to him.

The youth lay there so quiet and still that the two thought him sound asleep.

It happened that the two soldiers who were doing guard duty between the hours of twelve and two were cronies. Before, they were fellow losers in the gambling that was most always going on among the soldiers; and now they made use of the two hours in talking of their losses and trying to devise some way of getting their money back again.

Their attention was centered upon the subject of their conversation, and this gave Dick a good opportunity to work unobserved.

He pulled and tugged, and at last succeeded in getting his hands free.

The guards had observed nothing of what was going on. They were thinking and talking about gaming, and had no thoughts for anything else.

As soon as his hands were free, Dick began figuring on slipping away.

Seizing upon a moment when the two were very earnestly engaged in conversation, their backs being toward him, Dick rose softly and stole away.

The two did not hear him—did not suspect that the prisoner was escaping.

Dick was soon outside the range of the light from the campfire.

He was forced to move slowly and cautiously, however, for he would soon come to where other sentinels were guarding the encampment.

The Liberty Boy had no intention of leaving the British encampment without taking his horse along, however. He would not desert Major under any circumstances.

Major had more than once saved Dick's life through showing the enemy a clean pair of heels, and the youth could not think of going away without taking his horse.

He had been careful to note what disposition had been made of Major, and knew where to go to find the animal.

It was a difficult task to do without being seen, but Dick finally succeeded in getting Major bridled and saddled and out into the road, beside which the encampment had been made.

It was a dark night, and Dick had thus been enabled to escape being seen; but he felt that it would be impossible for him to get past the sentinels without being discovered.

After some deliberation he decided to mount and dash away at the top of Major's speed, rather than to try to sneak through the line of sentinels.

"The boldest course is the one most likely to succeed, I feel sure," he told himself.

Just as he was on the point of mounting, Dick heard wild yells from the guard who had been stationed to prevent his escape.

They had just discovered that the prisoner had disappeared.

"They will be after me in a jiffy!" thought Dick. Then he leaped into the saddle and urged Major away at a gallop.

He headed eastward along the road, and as it was dark enough so that he could not see the road, Dick let the horse have the rein.

He glanced back and could see the redcoats springing up, aroused by the yells of the two guards. The light from the campfires made this possible, though the fires were low.

He had just turned his head again when he heard a yell from in front.

"A sentinel!" thought Dick.

He knew the yell was a command for him to stop, but he did not do so. He would much rather take chances on getting past without getting a bullet in his body.

He even urged Major to a faster gait.

To tell the truth, Dick was much more fearful that Major would be hit than that he himself would. The horse was a much larger target.

Again came the yell, and quickly following it was the report of a musket.

Crack!

The bullet did not come anywhere near Dick; at least he did not hear it.

On he dashed, and was soon past the sentinel, who yelled again as the horse and rider dashed past.

The yells of the soldiers in the encampment could be heard now, and the sentinel, feeling sure that the horseman was the youth who had been a prisoner, drew a pistol and fired another shot after the fugitive.

This bullet went wide also, and Dick was out of danger, for before the sentinel could draw his other pistol the youth was out of range.

"There," breathed Dick; "I am safely away, and I'll wager that they will never catch me."

He was right about this. A number of troopers mounted their horses and gave chase, but they lost ground all the time, instead of gaining it, and as soon as they became



convinced of this fact they gave up the pursuit and returned to the encampment.

The colonel was up, and he inquired eagerly whether they had succeeded in catching the fugitive. He was greatly disappointed when told that all the troopers were back, and that they had failed.

Then he ordered the two soldiers who had been on guard when the prisoner escaped to be brought before him.

They were soon standing before him, and he put a lot of searching questions to them.

They made such answers as they could think of on the spur of the moment, and became sadly tangled, one flatly contradicting the other in several particulars.

The colonel frowned angrily and glared at the two.

"I am convinced that you have been negligent," he said, sternly; "and I therefore order that you be placed under guard until the affair can be investigated thoroughly."

So the two were marched back and were placed where Dick had been only a short time before.

Meanwhile Dick was making his way rapidly in the direction of the point where he expected to find the patriot army encamped.

He finally succeeded in reaching the encampment, and when he had passed the sentinels he dismounted, tied his horse and took off the bridle and saddle. Then he went to where his Liberty Boys were quartered and lay down and went to sleep.

He was up early next morning and was greeted pleasantly by his comrades.

"Why didn't you get back before nightfall, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, a handsome youth of about Dick's age.

"I had some adventures, Bob, and they delayed my return," was the reply.

"Tell us about it, old fellow."

"All right."

Dick told them about his adventures with the gypsy youths, and this made the Liberty Boys angry.

"Say, I'd like to get a chance to make those gypsy rascals squirm!" said Bob.

"Yah, I vould lige do make dose shippy vellers sguirm," said Carl Gookenspieler, the Dutch youth.

"Yis, ye'd be afther makin' av thim squirm, Oi am not t'inkin'," said Patsy Brannigan, the Irish member.

"Vat didded you know aboudid dot, Batsy Prannigan?" the Dutch boy said; "uf I gould nod dem shippy vellers mage some sguirmness, den nopotty gould it do, und dot is der trut'."

"Say, they left you in a bad fix, Dick," said Mark Morrison; "how did you manage to escape?"

"I was rescued by some British soldiers."

"Oh."

"Then there are some British soldiers in this part of the country?" asked Bob.

"Yes," and Dick went on and told about being taken

to the encampment of the British, and how he had managed to make his escape.

"Well, well! You had adventures enough for one night, sure enough!" said Bob.

"Yes; I had as many as I cared to have."

After breakfast Dick went to the tent occupied by General Sullivan. The general had just finished breakfast and gave Dick a pleasant greeting.

"What is the news?" he asked.

"There is a British force in the vicinity, sir," was the reply.

"Indeed? How large a force, Dick?"

"About one thousand men, sir."

"Ha, that is quite a large force. Where is it? How far from here?"

"About five miles."

"And did you learn anything regarding its business in these parts?"

"Nothing definite."

"Do you know which way it is headed?"

"Yes, toward the west."

"That is good; it is going the same direction with our own army."

"Yes; it is going to Tioga."

"Ah, indeed? I am glad to know that."

"Yes; it will be possible to overtake the British and surround them, don't you think?"

"I think it possible; we can make the attempt, at any rate."

Then he asked Dick a number of questions, which were answered promptly and in such a manner as gave entire satisfaction. The Liberty Boy had trained himself to be observant, and he saw everything there was to be seen when in the enemy's camp. This made him invaluable as a spy.

The general summoned his staff of officers and they held a council, Dick remaining to it.

When the officers learned that there was a good-sized British force so near at hand, they were somewhat excited, and all were eager to make rapid marches and overtake the enemy and give it a thrashing.

"If we can do that and then strike the Tories and Indians later on we will be all right," said one.

The others agreed with him in this view of the case.

It was decided to get an early start and make a forced march, so as to catch up with the British that day, if possible.

Dick, Bob and Mark were to go ahead as scouts and keep a close watch on the British. Of course, they were to keep the general informed regarding the whereabouts of the enemy.

They mounted their horses and set out at once, and when they reached the vicinity of the spot where the British had been encamped they stopped, dismounted, tied their horses and stole forward to see if the redcoats had broken camp.

They found that such was the case.



The British were gone.  
 "All right; we'll follow them," said Dick.  
 They went back to where they had left their horses and were soon mounted and riding westward. They rode slowly, however, for they did not know but they might happen upon the rear guard of the redcoats at any moment, after having passed the spot where the British had been encamped.

An hour later they paused on the top of a hill and gazed ahead down into the valley.

"Yonder they are!" suddenly exclaimed Bob, pointing.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PURSUING THE REDCOATS.

Bob had spoken the truth.

Down in the valley, a mile distant, was the British force.

It was marching westward at a good pace.

The youth watched the enemy for a few minutes, and then Dick said:

"Mark, get on your horse and hasten back and tell General Sullivan that we have seen the enemy."

"All right, Dick."

"Tell him where we saw it, as nearly as you can."

"I will."

"Then come back and rejoin us."

"All right."

Mark leaped into the saddle and rode back in the direction from which they had just come.

He was soon out of sight, and Dick and Bob kept on watching the British.

The two remained there an hour at least.

The British had long since gone out of the sight of the two youths.

Then Dick and Bob mounted their horses and rode onward.

They rode at a moderate pace, and it was nearly two hours later that they caught sight of the enemy again.

When they had done so they again paused and remained in the spot for more than an hour.

Mark rejoined them at the end of the hour, and was given a pleasant greeting.

"You saw General Sullivan?" asked Dick.

"Yes."

"And told him that we had sighted the enemy?"

"Yes, and where we had seen them."

"What did he say?"

"He asked me how far it was from where our army was at that time. I told him, and he shook his head and said he feared we could not overtake the redcoats to-day."

"I think he is right about that," said Dick; "they are marching rapidly, and it is my belief that they will reach Tioga before we can catch them."

"I hope not," said Bob; "I wish that we might get a chance to strike them before they get there."

"If we can't, we can't," said Dick; "perhaps we will get a good chance at them after they get there."

Suddenly there came the sharp crack of a musket and Dick's hat was knocked off.

"Great guns!" gasped Bob.

"Redcoats!" from Mark.

"Behind trees—quick!" from Dick.

In an instant the three were behind trees, and none too soon, for there came the sharp crack of another musket and a bullet came within six inches of Bob's head.

"Say, I don't like this," said Bob.

"Neither do I," from Mark.

"Watch closely," said Dick; "perhaps we may get a chance to return the compliment."

They watched and waited a minute, at least, without seeing any signs of the enemy, and then Bob dropped upon his hands and knees and began crawling off to the right.

"Where are you going?" asked Dick.

"I'm going to try to get around to where I can get my eyes on the rascals," was the reply.

"That is a good plan; I'll go around toward the left, while, Mark, you remain here. We ought to be able to get sight of them, I should think."

Dick dropped upon his hands and knees and began moving away toward the left.

He worked his way around till he was sure he was where he could catch sight of the men who had shot at them, if the fellows were still there.

Taking up his position behind a tree, he peered in the direction where he thought the enemy would be.

Suddenly there was the sharp crack of a pistol shot and a bullet whistled past Dick's head.

He whirled quickly and caught sight of a British soldier, who had fired at him from behind a tree quite a ways to the left.

Dick had his pistol in his hand, and he threw up his hand and fired a snap shot.

Dick was expert at this sort of work, and his bullet struck the redcoat in the arm, causing him to drop his pistol, as though it had suddenly become hot, while a wild yell went up from his lips.

Then the redcoat, his arm dangling helplessly at his side, dashed away through the timber.

At this moment there came the sharp crack of a pistol away over toward the right, and there was another yell, but this time from someone that was invisible to Dick.

"I guess Bob has winged one of the rascals," thought Dick. "Well, I am glad of it."

The next moment he saw Bob running through the timber as though in pursuit of someone.

"Hold on, Bob," Dick called out; "let them go."

Bob heard Dick and paused, but it was with evident reluctance, and he gazed longingly in the direction taken by the fleeing redcoat.



Then he came and joined Dick.

"I hit him in the shoulder, I think," he said; "where did you hit the fellow you shot at?"

"In the arm."

"Ah!"

"I made him drop his pistol; come along and I will get it."

Dick led the way to where the redcoat had stood when he was hit, and there on the ground lay a pistol.

Dick picked the weapon up and stuck it in his belt, with the remark that to the victors belonged the spoils.

Then he and Bob returned to where they had left Mark.

"Did you kill either of the redcoats?" the latter asked, eagerly.

"No," said Dick; "but we wounded both of them."

"What are we to do now?" asked Bob.

"We will have to keep on following the enemy, but will also have to exercise more care," said Dick.

"The two redcoats were scouts, don't you think?" asked Mark.

"Yes, without doubt."

"Do you suppose the redcoats know that an army is after them?"

"I begin to fear that they do," said Dick.

"The fact that they are marching so swiftly would seem to indicate that they know it," said Bob.

The youths continued to follow the British during the entire day, and several times Mark went back and reported to General Sullivan.

The British force reached Tioga about five o'clock, but did not stop there; it marched on through and went into camp at a point two miles northwest from there.

Dick, Bob and Mark followed till the British had gone into camp, and then they went back to Tioga and waited for the patriot army.

It arrived there an hour later and went into camp.

Dick went and reported to General Sullivan.

"So the British have gone into camp at a point two miles from here, Dick?" he remarked, when the youth had made his report.

"Yes, sir."

"How is their position, strong?"

"It is, sir; they are on a knoll, and I think it would be impossible for us to beat them, even though we outnumber them more than two to one."

The officer was silent and thoughtful.

"I judge that it will be best for us to wait till General Clinton joins us with the other half of my army," he said, musingly.

Dick said nothing.

"I wish I knew where General Clinton's force is," went on Sullivan; "then I would know whether to await his coming."

"I'll go and hunt his force up, sir," said Dick.

The general was silent and thoughtful for a few minutes, and then said:

"No; he will get here as quickly as possible, anyway, so

that would avail nothing. Instead of doing that, you may keep watch of the enemy and keep me informed regarding its movements.

"Very well, sir."

"I will give you that work to do, and I know it will be well done."

"Thank you; I will attend to it to the best of my ability."

After some further conversation Dick saluted and returned to where the Liberty Boys were quartered.

"Are we to make an attack to-night?" asked Bob eagerly.

Dick shook his head.

"I think not," he said.

"Why not?" in a disappointed voice.

"Well, I told him that the redcoats occupy a very strong position, and he does not want to run the risk of losing a large number of men, I suppose."

"But we have more than twice as many men as they have."

"I know that."

"Well, we could thrash them out of their boots."

"Perhaps we could and perhaps we couldn't. You must remember, Bob, that position counts for a great deal."

"Yes, we have proven that many a time," said Sam Sanderson."

"Yes," said Mark Morrison; "we have thrashed forces two and three times as large as ours many a time, just because we had a strong position."

"If General Clinton gets here with the other half of our army before the British leave, then we will go and make an attack," said Dick.

"Yes, but he may not get here for three or four days, and the redcoats may get away," grumbled Bob.

"Well, it will be better to let them get away than to attack them and lose a goodly portion of our own army."

"Then we are just going to sit here and let them go?"

"No, we are going to watch them, and if they leave their present position we will pounce upon them."

"Oh, well, that isn't so bad."

Bob evidently felt better on hearing this.

"And while we are waiting," said Dick, "it is to be our duty to keep watch on the enemy."

"That will give us something to do," said Mark.

After the youths had eaten supper Dick told Bob and Mark to come with him.

"We will go out to the vicinity of the British encampment and see what they are doing there," he said.

"I'm ready," said Bob.

"And so am I," from Mark.

The three youths then left the patriot encampment and made their way toward the northwest.

Three-quarters of an hour later they were close to the British encampment.

"Now we will have to be careful," said Dick; "we must not let our presence be discovered."



They stole forward as noiselessly as so many Indians. Nearer and nearer to the encampment they drew, and at last were halfway up the slope.

"We had better stop here," said Dick, cautiously.

They paused and took as careful an observation of the encampment as was possible.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A WONDERFUL SURPRISE.

Dick feared that the British might be intending to break camp and move on as soon as it grew dark.

He was sure they knew that a strong patriot force was near at hand, and it was his idea that the redcoats might try to slip away and escape.

There was no sign to indicate that the British had any such idea in their heads, however. The encampment had the appearance of permanency; at any rate the usual preparations had been made that were made for an all-night stay.

Still, it would not do to take it for granted that the enemy would remain there all night, and so Dick and his two comrades withdrew to a point far enough away so that they would be safe from discovery, and Dick said that each would take a turn at watching the encampment.

"You watch first, Mark," he said; "and Bob and I will lie down and get some sleep. Wake me in about three hours."

The youths took turns watching throughout the night, but the redcoats did not break camp. They were there in the morning.

Leaving Bob and Mark on guard, Dick made his way back to the patriot encampment at Tioga and reported to General Sullivan.

"So they are still there, Dick?" the general remarked. "Good. Go back and keep watch, and the moment you see they are getting ready to move come and let me know."

"I will do so, sir."

Dick thought it would be well to have more men with him, so he took a couple of the youths back with him.

They had gone only about three-quarters of a mile when they were suddenly set upon by eight or ten Hessian soldiers, who leaped out and seized the three before they had time to defend themselves.

"What does this mean?" asked Dick, simulating surprise that they should have been set upon in this fashion.

"It means dot you are our bris'ners," was the reply of the one who seemed to be the leader.

"Why have you made us prisoners?"

"Because I t'ink you are rebels."

"You are mistaken."

The Hessian shook his head.

"I gannod know dot," he said.

"It is true, nevertheless. You have made a mistake, and I ask that you let us go."

The Hessian shook his head.

"I gannod do it," he said.

Then he ordered that the prisoners' hands be bound together behind their backs.

This was done.

"Now bring dem along," he ordered.

Dick and the two youths did not intend to be taken to the British encampment if they could help it, however, and so they held back and refused to walk along in company with their captors.

This angered the Hessians, and they jabbered to one another in German at a great rate.

"You might as well come along," said the leader; "you vill haf to come."

"We will do nothing of the kind," said Dick; "we are not rebels and are not going to be taken to your encampment."

"You must go; ve vill take you if we haf to carry you."

"That is what you will have to do if you take us," determinedly.

Again the Hessians tried to get the three youths to walk along, but failed, and the leader said something in German.

The Hessian soldiers then divided into three groups of three each, and these groups each seized hold of a Liberty Boy. They lifted the youths and carried them along, but Dick managed to kick loose from the fellow who had him by the heels, and this caused delay and further exasperated the Hessians.

They dropped the three youths in the road and again talked rapidly and excitedly.

Presently the leader said something, and three of the soldiers hastened away up the road.

They were gone perhaps thirty minutes, and then returned leading three scrawny-looking mules.

Dick and his two comrades looked at one another lugubriously.

They understood what this meant. They were to be placed on the mules and then they would have to go, whether they wished to do so or not.

"Ha, so you got dem, eh?" the leader remarked, as the three arrived on the scene with the mules.

One of the three replied in German, and then the leader gave an order in that language, and the Liberty Boys were taken, one after another, and placed on the backs of the mules. To insure the prisoners remaining on the backs of the mules their feet were tied down by ropes running underneath the stomachs of the animals.

"There, now I t'ink you vill go," said the leader, in a voice of satisfaction.

"I guess that we will have to do so," agreed Dick.

The Hessians then started up the road, leading the animals, and presently came to a log house standing beside the road. It was here that the soldiers had procured the mules.



Two men stood in front of the cabin, and Dick recognized one as being Royal Ambrose, an Englishman, whom he had met on the road one day a week before. He had talked with the Englishman awhile, and had learned that he was bound for Tioga. As Dick had to stay back and travel no faster than the army he was with, the Englishman had come on and had reached Tioga ahead of him.

"I wonder why he is here?" Dick asked himself.

The other man was evidently the owner of the cabin, and it was also evident that he did not expect to see his mules again, for there was a black look on his face, and when the Hessians had got past and were not looking back he shook his fist at them.

"Goodby to my mules," he said to his companion.

"You think you will never get them back?" the Englishman asked.

"I am sure that I shall never see them again."

"That will be too bad."

"Yes, but it can't be helped."

"It won't matter so much, though, if you decide to return to England with me, Enoch."

The other looked sober and thoughtful.

"I don't think that I will return with you, though, Royal," he said.

"Why not?"

"I have already told you; because I have learned to like this country. I am really an American at heart, and do not like to think of having to bow the knee to any man and call him king."

"Oh, you will soon forget your foolish ideas regarding independence and all that, Enoch. Make up your mind to return with me. I really dread to go back alone and tell Gerald Martinson that his nephew is dead."

"It will be a great shock to him, no doubt, now that he has become penitent and wishes to make amends for robbing his brother and sending his brother's son to America to get him out of the way."

"I am sorry that George died," said Ambrose; "I was the best friend his father ever had, and I came to America hoping I would be able to take Henry's son back and install him master of the Martinson estate."

Enoch Sanderson—such was his name—shook his head.

"It was not to be, I suppose," he said; "I am sorry that I ever had any hand in injuring Henry Martinson, but at the time I agreed to do Gerald Martinson's evil work I was not overscrupulous, and I was very short of funds. The sum offered me by Gerald was so far in excess of any sum I had ever dreamed of possessing that I was easily persuaded to do his work, and I did it." He was silent a few moments, and then went on:

"I don't think I would like to return to England and meet Gerald. The meeting would not be a pleasant one for either of us, I am sure."

"Probably not; perhaps it is as well that you should not return."

"I feel sure of this."

A few words will explain what the reader has not gath-

ered from the above conversation: Fifteen years before Gerald Martinson, an Englishman, had managed to get his brother Henry sent to prison, convicted of a forgery that Gerald himself had committed. The shame of the affair had broken Henry's heart, and he was taken sick in prison, and died within six months of the time of his incarceration. He had a son three years old, but his wife was dead. This son, whose name was George, was the heir to the Martinson estate—which had descended to Henry because he was the elder brother—and if he were gotten out of the way Gerald would come into possession of the property. He paid Enoch Sanderson a large sum to kidnap George and carry him away to America. This was done, and then Gerald took possession. He remained in possession of the estate fifteen years, and then was compelled to take to his bed, afflicted with a disease that must take him off within a very few months. He became penitent, confessed all to Royal Ambrose, who was a dear friend of Henry Martinson while he was alive, and at Gerald's earnest solicitation Royal Ambrose had agreed to come to America to look for Enoch Sanderson and the boy, George Martinson. As we have seen, Ambrose had come to America and had found Enoch Sanderson, only to learn that the boy, George, the heir to the Martinson estate, was dead. The only thing for Ambrose to do was to return to England and tell Gerald Martinson the news, but he was so weary because of the long trip from New York City on horseback that he had decided to remain at Enoch Sanderson's home a few days and rest up. Sanderson expressed himself in such strong terms as being sorry that he had done what he had that Ambrose could not feel very hard toward him, and they were on amiable terms at the time when we introduce them to the reader's notice.

They then discussed the affair of the three prisoners in the Hessians' hands.

"I thought that I recognized one of the young men on the mules," Ambrose said; "if he is the youth I think he is, I met him a few days ago on the road while I was coming and talked with him quite awhile."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; it must be that he is a rebel, else the Hessians would not have taken him prisoner."

"Likely he is a patriot," was the reply; "possibly he may be a spy acting for the commander of the patriot army that arrived at Tioga yesterday evening."

"That is more than likely."

"I think so."

"I wish the Hessians had not captured the three young fellows, even though they may be rebel spies," said Sanderson; "if they had not done so I would still have my mules."

Meanwhile the Hessians were trudging along, leading the mules, and presently they came in sight of what was evidently a gypsies' camp. There were a score of tents, three or four covered wagons and one wagon that was boarded up till it looked like a small house on wheels.

Dick had not seen the camp when he went to Tioga,



two hours before, so the gypsies must have arrived only lately and gone into camp.

"That must be the band that is ruled over by Queen Elsie and Gypsy Madge," thought Dick; "I wonder why they have come so far at this time?"

He wondered if it would do any good for him to call to the gypsies to help himself and comrades regain their liberty. He feared that it would not, for he did not think the gypsies would likely be very good fighters.

Still he made up his mind to give the plan a trial, if any of the gypsies were within call as they passed the encampment.

The Hessians led the mules, on the backs of which the three Liberty Boys were tied, and as they came opposite to the gypsies' camp were given a wonderful surprise. Up from among the bushes rose a dozen gypsies with muskets leveled.

"Surrender or die!" cried Gypsy Madge, in a shrill voice.

## CHAPTER IX.

### RESCUED.

It was indeed a wonderful surprise.

The Hessians had not been expecting anything of the kind and were almost paralyzed.

They came to a sudden stop and stared in open-mouthed amazement, not unmixed with terror.

The gypsies were indeed enough to inspire terror in the hearts of their enemies. They were wild and fierce-looking, and there could be little doubt but that they could fire without hesitation.

Gypsy Madge, dark but beautiful, standing before the astonished Hessians, did not detract from the dangerous look of the situation. Her presence rather heightened the effect and made the scene more impressive.

"Great guns, Dick, but isn't she a beauty, though!" said Tom Waldron, who was one of the two youths with Dick. He was staring at Madge with a look of the most intense admiration in his eyes.

"Yes, she is very pretty, indeed," said Dick in reply; "and she is going to rescue us."

Presently the leader of the Hessians found his voice and he said, with an attempt at boldness:

"You will nod dare fire upon soldiers of der king. Put down der musgets."

"You will see whether we will dare fire or not, if you don't throw down your muskets and surrender," cried Madge. "Quick! I shall not ask you to do this again."

The Hessians looked at one another uneasily and then their leader inquiringly. It was evident that they did not wish to take the chances of refusing to surrender.

"Drop der musgets, men," ordered the leader.

They obeyed the command with alacrity.

Down dropped the muskets with a clatter that scared the mules and caused them to crouch and lay back their ears.

"You are sensible," said Gypsy Madge, nodding her head approvingly; "now unbuckle your belts and drop them to the ground."

The Hessians groaned aloud, but obeyed.

Then Madge said something to some of the gypsies near her, and three laid down their muskets and hastened to the heads of the mules and took hold of the bridle-reins.

"Now you soldiers may go," said Madge; "but, beware! Don't think to come back here and get revenge on us, for if you make the attempt it will go hard with you!"

The leader of the Hessians made no reply, but he said something to his men in the German language and all set out up the road.

"Free the young men," ordered Madge, and several of the gypsies hastened forward and cut the bonds binding their arms, as well as the ropes that were tied to their feet.

As soon as they were thus freed the youths leaped to the ground and hastened to where Madge stood.

"I thank you, Miss Madge," said Dick; "you have done us a very great kindness, indeed. You have saved us from being held prisoners, and possibly from being shot or hanged as spies."

"I am glad that I have been able to do you a favor, Mr. Slater," said the girl, earnestly; "I have not forgotten that you saved me from a horrible death when you shot the head off the copperhead snake that was about to bite me."

"Well, we are even now, but will say no more about that; let me make you acquainted with my comrades, here."

Then Dick presented Tom Waldron and Will Merton, both of whom were already greatly impressed by the beauty of the gypsy maiden.

They shook hands with her and were thrilled by her touch.

Then the girl pointed to the mules and said:

"Are those yours?"

"No," replied Dick; "they belong to a farmer back down the road a ways. The Hessians went there and got the animals for us to ride."

"I will have some of the men take the mules back to their owner." She gave the order, and three of the gypsies walked away, leading the animals.

At this moment Queen Elsie approached, she having come forth from the wagon-house.

She gave Dick a hearty greeting, and then asked if he thought they would be in any danger as a result of what Madge and the gypsy men had done.

"I fear that such may be the case if you remain here," said Dick; "there is a large force of British and Hessian soldiers not more than a mile from here, and as soon as those who just left here get to their encampment they will



tell their story and a strong force will come with the intention of punishing you people."

"What are we to do?" asked Queen Elsie, anxiously.

"I will tell you what to do. Break camp at once and go back and get on the other side of Tioga. There is a patriot army there and the British and Hessians will not be able to get at you."

"That is what we will do," the queen declared, and then she gave the command to break camp.

The gypsies had gathered up the muskets and belts of weapons the Hessians had dropped, and these were placed in the wagons. Then they hastily broke camp, for they were afraid a strong force of redcoats or Hessians might put in an appearance before they could get away.

This did not happen, however; they broke camp and moved away and succeeded in getting back to Tioga and past that place without having seen any of the Hessians.

They stopped a quarter of a mile beyond the patriot encampment and again went into camp.

When all was done and the gypsies had settled down to take their ease, as was their custom when in camp, Queen Elsie said to Madge:

"Your desire to follow the handsome young stranger who saved your life might have got us into serious trouble."

"So it might, mother," was the reply; "but it gave me a chance to do something for him in return for what he did for me, and I am more than satisfied. I am very glad, indeed, that we did come."

"Well, I am not sorry, now that it has turned out all right."

The gypsy queen looked at her daughter for awhile intently and searchingly, and then said:

"Madge, I fear you have lost your heart to this handsome young stranger."

The girl shook her head, while a peculiar light appeared in her eyes.

"I was beginning to think that such was the case myself, mother, until——" She paused and the queen said: "Until—when?"

"Why, until I saw that handsome, blue-eyed young man that was with him; the one he called Tom."

Queen Elsie nodded.

"So you have fallen in love with him, have you? Well, he certainly is handsome, and I am sure that he has taken a fancy to you, Madge."

"Do you think so?" a pleased light in her eyes.

"I do, but I want one thing distinctly understood, Madge, and that is that no young man must be permitted to pay suit to you unless he announces his willingness to become a member of our band in case he marries you."

The girl blushed.

"Why, mother, I haven't thought anything about getting married," she said.

"Perhaps not; but you will be thinking about it before long, and when that time comes you must remember that,

unless the young man is willing to become a gypsy must not pay court to you."

There was a thoughtful look on the girl's face, which was followed by a sober, almost sad look.

"I don't think you need worry, mother," she said, smiling; "the young man would not care to marry a gypsy would he?"

"He might do a great deal worse," was the reply; "in fact, you are——" She broke off suddenly and was silent a few moments, and then went on:

"Rollo loves you and wishes to marry you, Madge."

"And I hate him!" almost passionately; "I will not consent to become his wife—never!"

"If you married him you would be sure of having a band who would remain a gypsy, Madge."

"I don't want to be a gypsy!" said the girl, quickly and passionately; "I hate the life, and—yes—I hate the people!"

Queen Elsie looked at the girl for a few moments in silence. "Blood will tell," she said, as though speaking to herself. Then she went on:

"Why, you are a gypsy yourself; what do you mean by saying you hate the people?"

"Mother, I may be a gypsy," said the girl, earnestly; "but I don't feel like one. Sometimes I almost think there cannot be gypsy blood in my veins, for, as I saw awhile ago, I almost hate the looks of the mean, swarthy-faced men."

"Yet they are not all bad men, by any means, Madge."

"I know that, mother; still, they do not seem to me to be my kind of people."

"Get that idea out of your head, Madge. We are gypsies, and gypsies we must remain to the end. Don't put any different notions into your head. I shall be willing for the young man to court you, providing he will agree to become a gypsy, if you are married, but not otherwise."

"Perhaps he will never care to try to see me again, mother."

There was a sad tone to her voice and a wistful look on her face and in her eyes. The old woman felt sorry for her daughter, but said nothing.

The girl said no more, for she wished to think, and then she went and entered the wagon-house and gave herself up to thoughts of the handsome Liberty Boy, Tom Waldron.

The gypsies, now that they had a patriot army between them and the British and Hessians, breathed easier. They had been very much frightened.

Fighting was not in their line, but they had got the better of the ten Hessians, and the majority were proud of their achievement.

The only ones who were not proud of it were Rollo and his comrades, who had captured Dick and left him a prisoner in the hollow tree.

They had been surprised to see him alive, and would have been glad had he been left a prisoner in the hands of the Hessians.



## CHAPTER X.

## WATCHING THE BRITISH.

Dick and his two comrades who had been rescued from the hands of the Hessians by the gypsies did not return to Tioga in company with the gypsies. Instead, they set out in the direction taken by the Hessians.

They reasoned that the Hessians would want to get back to their encampment as quickly as possible, so were not much afraid of overtaking them.

Nor did they; they did not see the Hessians at all.

The three youths reached the point where Bob and Mark were stationed watching the British, and Bob wanted to know what had delayed them.

"We have been looking for you a long time," he said.

"We had enough to delay us," said Dick. Then he told about being captured by the Hessians.

"And the gypsies rescued you!" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes, it was due to Gypsy Madge. One of the gypsies came into their encampment with the news that some Hessians had captured three young men, one of whom was the youth who had visited their camp two or three days before, and Madge then ordered the men to get their muskets and be ready to give the Hessians a surprise and rescue the prisoners. They did so, and we were set free."

"Well, you were lucky to get out of it so easily."

"Yes, so we were."

The youths kept close watch of the British, and noted that no move was being made to break camp and march away.

"It looks as though they were going to stay there and fight a battle," said Dick.

"Perhaps they expect to receive reinforcements," said Mark.

"That is possible, of course."

"Well, we are going to receive reinforcements, too," said Mark.

"So we are," from Dick.

Dick finally parted from his companions and made his way around to the farther side of the point where the British was encamped. He wished to see if there was a better approach from that side in case it was decided by General Sullivan to make an attack.

He found that the slope was not quite so steep on that side.

"It would be easier to make the attack from here than from the other side," he told himself.

He took up his position behind a tree and watched the British campment closely. He located the points where it would be easiest to enter if an attack was made.

While he was standing there looking at the encampment, three rough-looking men were crawling toward him from behind.

They were the three Tories, Jennings, Hudson and Spencer, with whom Royal Ambrose had come as far as

Tioga after encountering them on the road twenty miles east of Tioga.

They had joined the British force and had been out on a scouting expedition and were returning.

They had caught sight of Dick, and, thinking they might be doing something that would bring them into favor with the commander of the British force, they decided to capture the spy, for such they believed Dick to be.

They slipped up to within about ten yards of Dick, and then, leveling their rifles, stood there a few moments waiting for the youth to turn around. As he did not do this, Jennings called out:

"Yer our pris'ner, young feller!"

Dick whirled around quickly, and when he saw the three standing there with leveled rifles in their hands, he felt that he was in great danger of being captured.

"Hello, who are you?" he asked. They were far enough away from the encampment so that voices would not be heard, unless raised above the ordinary conversational tone.

"We air friends ter ther king," said Jennings; "an' we berlong with ther army up thar on ther hill. Jest raise yer han's, young feller."

"What for?"

"Ye know, we air goin' ter take ye inter ther camp er pris'ner."

"You will be wasting your time if you do that," said Dick. "I was passing along here and happened to see that there was an encampment on the hill; I stopped to look at it and you came up and leveled your rifles at me. You may as well let me go on my way."

The three shook their heads and Jennings said:

"We've be'n watchin' ye fur quite er spell, an' I guess ye air er rebel spy."

"You are mistaken."

"We don' think so; jest raise yer han's."

Dick saw they were not to be fooled.

"If I get away I will have to fight to do it," he told himself.

He decided that he would make his escape if possible.

"I must not permit these Tory rascals to take me prisoner," he said to himself; "I must escape, even though I have to take some chances in trying to do so."

In order to throw the Tories off their guard, however, and make them think he was going to surrender he raised his hands above his head.

"Thet's senserble," said Jennings.

Then he and his two comrades started toward the youth. As they drew nearer they lowered their rifles, for they did not think of such a thing as that the young stranger would attempt to get away, now that they had him in such close quarters.

But they did not know Dick Slater.

He was not the youth to permit himself to be captured by three men when there was a possible chance of escaping.

The instant the rifles were lowered from the men's



shoulders Dick acted. He leaped forward and dealt the men blows in rapid succession, dropping them to the ground.

The rifles were discharged, the Tories involuntarily pulling the triggers as they fell, and the noise of the reports sounded as loud to Dick as a volley from the muskets of a regiment.

"Jove, the redcoats will be swarming this way like bees in a few moments!" he told himself, and then he darted away at the top of his speed.

The Tories were already scrambling to their feet, and they yelled to him to stop; but of course he paid no attention to them.

He felt that he would be successful in getting away, now that he had got clear from the scouts.

The three gave chase, but they were not so fleet-footed as was Dick, and he quickly drew away from them.

At last they lost sight of the fugitive and stopped and looked at one another in disgust.

"Waal, he's got erway," from Jennings.

"Yas, he wuz too smart fur us," said Hudson.

"Blazes, but kain't he run!" from Spencer.

They turned and made their way back toward the British encampment, and presently met a number of redcoats, who asked what the trouble was.

"Who did the firing? And who was that you were chasing?" asked one.

"Et wuz er rebel spy," said Jennings.

"How do you know?"

The Tory explained that they had seen the person in question watching the camp from behind a tree.

"He sartinly mus' hev be'n er spy," Jennings said in conclusion.

The redcoats nodded their heads.

"Undoubtedly you are right," the leader said; "and I am sorry that you did not capture him."

"So are we," and the speaker felt of a lump on the side of his face, where Dick's fist had landed.

The other two Tories nodded assent to this statement, and felt of the spots where Dick's fist had dealt them blows.

"He must be a pretty dangerous man to have succeeded in getting away from you three men," said one of the redcoats.

"You are right," agreed Jennings, "and he is on'y er young feller at thet."

"Is that so?"

"Yas; I don' think he is more'n eighteen er nineteen years old."

"Well, he can hit hard, as I suppose you three could testify."

"Ye bet we kin testerfy ter thet," from Hudson.

"An' we'll hit ther youngster hard, ef ever we git ther chance!" from Jennings.

Then they made their way back to the encampment.

Meanwhile Dick had circled around and was hastening back to where he had left his comrades.

"What was that shooting about?" asked Bob, when Dick put in an appearance.

Dick explained.

"I told the boys you had got into trouble," said Bob; "I knew you were mixed up in the affair, some way."

"It wasn't with my consent, though," with a smile; "I would have avoided it, if possible, which is, I think, more than you could say, had it been you, for we all know that you are never so happy as when mixed up in a melee of some kind."

"That's the truth," said Mark Morrison.

Bob grinned.

"Well, I guess you are not far wrong," he said; "I only wish I had been with you, to help you upset the three Tories."

"I made a very good job of it, without any help at all," said Dick. "Those Tories will carry the marks from my fist for several days."

"And serve them right," from Bob.

Then Dick told the youths to keep close watch on the encampment, and to send one of their number to Tioga if they saw any indications that the redcoats were to break camp, after which he again parted from them and made his way back toward Tioga.

As he drew near the home of Enoch Sanderson, Royal Ambrose came out and joined him.

"Good morning," the Englishman said.

"Good morning, sir," replied Dick, eyeing the man keenly.

"Are you going to Tioga?" Ambrose asked.

"I am."

"Do you mind my walking along with you?"

"Certainly not; I shall be glad to have you do so."

"Thank you."

They walked along the road and kept up a conversation on indifferent subjects, but presently Ambrose said

"A band of gypsies went along the road about two hours ago. Do you have any knowledge regarding their objective point? Do you know where they were going?"

"Yes; they went to a point beyond Tioga a little way and went into camp."

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yes; they rescued myself and two comrades from the hands of a party of Hessians. You saw us; you and your friend back yonder were out in front of the house when we passed."

"Yes, I thought I recognized you as being one of the three who were riding the mules."

"You are right; I was one of the three."

"The mules belong to my friend, so we were somewhat interested. He did not expect ever to see his mules again."

"The gypsies brought the animals back, didn't they?"

"Yes; but when we asked them questions they refused to answer. They simply left the mules and went away. It and after awhile the entire band passed, going in this direction."



"Yes; after rescuing us from the hands of the Hessians they were afraid to remain there, and I advised that they move down past Tioga and get the patriot army between themselves and danger."

"That was a wise move, no doubt."

"Yes; a party of redcoats came down this way to attack the gypsies and punish them, but found them missing."

Royal Ambrose nodded.

"I saw the party," he said.

He accompanied Dick as far as Tioga, and then made his way onward toward the gypsies' camp, while Dick went to make his report to General Sullivan.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MADGE FINDS A FATHER.

Royal Ambrose, the Englishman, had made up his mind to remain in the vicinity for awhile.

He wished to see a battle, and the fact that the British and the patriot armies were so near together made it seem likely that there would be a battle before long.

Then, too, he was haunted by the face of the gypsy girl, Madge, who had told his fortune a couple of days before. He had known someone that the face reminded him of, and that morning, after the gypsies had passed, the thought of whom it was that the girl reminded him had come to him suddenly with almost the force of a blow.

The girl's face brought to him the remembrance of his wife, who had been dead ten years.

He wished to see the girl again and talk to her. He scarcely knew why he wished to do this. He could not explain it to himself; he felt that way about it, and had yielded to the inclination.

Then, too, he was curious regarding the queen of the gypsies, who, so the girl had told him, would not see anyone who was a native of England.

"Why can she have an antipathy to English people, I wonder?" he asked himself.

And then he wondered that she should hate Englishmen to such an extent as to make her unwilling to see one.

"It must be that she was a gypsy in England many years ago," he said to himself; "and probably some unpleasant episode in her life there has turned her against English people and makes her unwilling to see or talk to one."

He was determined to see her, if possible, however. His curiosity had been aroused, and he was eager to learn the secret of the gypsy queen's actions.

It did not take him long to reach the gypsy encampment, and when he entered it the dark-faced, swarthy men and women looked at him curiously.

"I wish to see your queen," he said to one of the men.

"D'ye wanter hev yer fortune told?" was the query.

"Yes, of course."

"Go ter ther waggin, yender."

Royal Ambrose went to the wagon and ascended the steps and knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" he heard, in a feminine voice.

"A stranger who wishes his fortune told."

"Enter," was the terse reply.

The man opened the door and entered, closing it behind him.

Then he turned and faced the gypsy queen, who was seated facing him in a chair standing against a partition that divided the wagon-house into two compartments.

For an instant the man and the woman gazed at each other, and then Ambrose almost gasped:

"Eloise!"

"So it is you, is it, Royal Ambrose?" the gypsy queen said, in a cold, hard voice; "had I known it was you who knocked I would have refused you admittance, but it is too late now."

"Yes, I am here, and I am as glad that I have met you as you can possibly be sorry that I have done so."

"State your business, Royal Ambrose, and then begone; you will remember, if you take the trouble to think, that I have no reason to feel friendly toward you. You, the son of a wealthy Englishman, thought it great sport to toy with the heart of a gypsy maiden who was a member of a band of gypsies on your father's estate; you taught me to love you, and then laughed at me and went and married a woman in your own circle. I have not forgotten if you have, and you turned my love to hate—and I hate you yet!"

"But that is folly, Eloise; I was scarcely more than a boy at that time, and did not understand that I was inflicting sorrow upon you; I have oceans of money, Eloise, and if money will help you to forget and to think bet—"

The woman made a gesture of anger and disgust.

"I don't want your money," she said; "you gave Madge a gold-piece the other day for telling your fortune, and when she gave it to me I threw it away. It seemed to be burning my hand."

"You are foolish, Eloise, but—"

"Don't call me Eloise; my name is now Elsie."

"Very well, Elsie. And now, answer a question: Who is this girl Madge?"

The woman laughed harshly.

"She is my daughter," she replied.

Royal Ambrose looked searchingly at the woman.

"Eloi—I mean Elsie, you threatened to be revenged upon me when I had the interview with you after I was married; do you remember it?"

Again the woman laughed harshly.

"Oh, yes, I remember it," she said; "I have never forgotten it."

The Englishman nodded.



"And, Elsie, do you know, I have become possessed of a suspicion that you did have revenge," he said, looking at her searchingly and eagerly.

The gypsy woman gave him a sharp glance.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

He did not reply at once, but looked at the woman in a penetrating manner.

"Elsie," he said, slowly and impressively, "who is this girl Madge? She is not your daughter, I am sure, for she has a fair skin, although browned by exposure to the sun. I have thought that——"

He paused, and the woman looked at him, smiled coldly and said:

"You have thought—what?"

"That—it—might be—possible that—my daughter Frances—was not—drowned in the river—after—all."

He spoke hesitatingly, brokenly, and kept his eyes fastened on the woman's face in an inquiring, almost imploring look.

"Oh, you have suspected that your daughter Frances was not drowned, Royal?"

There was a sneering intonation to the woman's voice.

"Yes, and—since I—have seen this—girl Madge—I have become possessed—of the idea—that perhaps—she might be—that it was possible—that you secured revenge on me—by kidnapping—my little daughter Frances, and—that—she was not drowned in the river, after all!"

The gypsy woman looked at him with a sneering and triumphant expression in her eyes and on her face.

"You are mistaken, if the suspicion has entered your mind that Madge might be your daughter, Royal Ambrose," she said; "she is my daughter."

He looked at the speaker searchingly, but she met his gaze unflinchingly, and with a sigh he said:

"It was a wild hope, perhaps; I suppose that I am foolish to have entertained it for a moment."

"Yes, indeed; very foolish. And now, Royal Ambrose, if you please, go. I do not care to have any further conversation with you, nor do I wish to ever lay eyes on you again. Go!"

"Very well; I will go," and, turning, he opened the door, passed through the doorway, closing the door after him, and, descending the steps, walked through the encampment and into the timber at the farther side.

He had gone perhaps one hundred yards when he heard light footsteps behind him, and, turning, he saw the girl Madge.

His face lighted up and he looked at the girl eagerly.

"Ah, Madge, I am glad to see you," he said.

Madge had an eager, excited look on her face also, and she said:

"You have just been to see my mother?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"I was in the other room when you were talking to her," the girl went on; "I heard you say you lost a daughter years ago in England; that you thought she was

drowned in a river, but that you had, since seeing me, become suspicious that I might be that daughter, and that Queen Elsie—she doesn't seem like a mother to me, and never has—had kidnapped me and brought me to America."

"Yes, I did hope that such a thing might be true, but she declared it was not."

"What made you think of such a thing?" eagerly.

"The fact that you make me think of my wife whenever I look at you."

The girl's eyes shone.

"Do I make you think of your wife?"

"Yes, indeed!"

Madge was silent a few moments, and then said, slowly:

"Perhaps I am your daughter, after all, sir!"

Royal Ambrose looked thoughtfully at the girl.

"Don't you believe that Queen Elsie is your mother?" he asked.

Madge shook her head.

"No, I do not," she replied; "she has never seemed to me like what I have imagined a mother should seem. I don't believe I am a gypsy, for the life is distasteful to me, and only to-day I was telling her that I do not like the swarthy-faced, evil-looking men and women."

"What did she say to that?"

"She said—let me see, what did she say? Ah, I remember now. She said something that would give color to the suspicion that I am not a gypsy."

"What was it that she said?"

"When I told her that I did not like the men and women of our band she looked at me queerly and said: 'Blood will tell.'"

"Ha, did she say that?" excitedly.

"Yes."

"Then I feel sure that you are not her daughter, Madge, and if that is true, then I would be willing to wager anything that you are my child! Oh, if only there was some way that we could make sure regarding this matter!"

"I wish there was a way!" a sad, wistful look on her face.

Royal Ambrose thought a few moments, and then suddenly an exclamation escaped his lips.

"I know!" he cried, excitedly; "six months before my little daughter was supposed to have been lost she fell and cut a gash in the side of her face, just below the right ear. It left a scar half an inch long, and it would undoubtedly stay always. Let me see if you have such a mark."

"I have!" Madge exclaimed; "I have seen it in the looking-glass many times. See, here it is!"

She turned the side of her face toward him and a glance was sufficient.

"You are my daughter Frances!" he cried, and, seizing her in his arms, he kissed her tenderly.

"Father!" breathed the girl; "you are my father, and I am not a gypsy. Oh, I am so glad!"



## CHAPTER XII.

## QUEEN ELSIE IS ANGRY.

"No, you are not a gypsy," said Royal Ambrose; "you are my daughter, and without doubt you were kidnapped by this gypsy queen, who did it to be revenged on me."

"I feel that you are right about this," said the girl; "I am sure that Queen Elsie is not my mother."

"I know it, and I am absolutely confident that you are my daughter. Come, let us get away from here at once. Queen Elsie may try to prevent you from leaving, if she knows of it."

The girl seemed eager to go at first, and then another thought evidently struck her, for she hesitated and stood looking at Royal Ambrose in a somewhat dubious manner.

"What is the matter?" he asked, his face falling; "don't you want to leave your gypsy companions, after all?"

"Yes, I wish to leave them," said the girl, hesitatingly; "but—will you want me to go back to England with you?"

"Yes, Frances."

The girl looked sober and thoughtful. She thought of Tom Waldron, the handsome Liberty Boy, and the knowledge came to her that she did not wish to go to England.

"I prefer to remain in America, sir—father," she said.

"But, Frances, think how nice it will be to go back to England, to beautiful England, where I have an immense estate, for I am very wealthy, and live there among wealthy, titled and cultured people. Think how—"

"I don't care anything about wealth and titles, father," interrupted the girl; "and the people of America are cultured enough to suit me."

The Englishman shook his head and looked sad.

"The result of the training you have had," he said, in mournful accents; "but, really, Frances, you cannot refuse to return with me. Why, I am your father, and that is the place for you."

The girl shook her head.

"I would never be willing to stay there," she said; "so what would be the use for me to go?"

"You don't know whether you would be willing to stay or not, until after you have been there and seen what the country is like," he said.

"Yes I do," decidedly.

"I think that is just a girlish notion. England is a much more beautiful country than this."

"I don't see how that can be possible, father; it is very beautiful here."

"But it is wild and untamed. There, all is under the control of man, and civilization is at its highest stage."

"I like it as it is here."

Royal Ambrose shook his head.

"I understand," he said, sadly; "you have lived here nearly all your life and have learned to like it. But I am sure you would soon learn to like it much better in England."

"I am sure that I would not, father; I would be like the

songbird that has been captured and placed in a cage. I would sicken and die."

"Then what is to be done? Surely you do not wish to go back to your gypsy life?"

The girl shook her head.

"No, I don't want to live the life of a gypsy any longer," he said; "neither do I want to go to England."

"Then what can we do?"

The girl was silent for a few moments, and there was a thoughtful look in her eyes. Presently she said, slowly:

"Why can you not stay in America?"

Royal Ambrose started.

"I might be willing to remain in America," he said; "but not in this part of the country. I think that I could get along in New York City, but up in these wilds, never!"

Madge looked at her father eagerly. She had learned that the Liberty Boys came from near New York, and the thought came to her that if she were to live there she would have a better chance to see Tom Waldron and win his love than if she were to remain here in central New York. She knew that the Liberty Boys were only here for a short time, and that they would soon be gone, but if she was to make her home near where Tom's home was she would be sure of seeing him when the war ended.

"Will you take me to New York, father?" she asked, eagerly; "if you will do so I will be glad. I would be willing to go there, but not to England."

"Yes, I will take you to New York, Frances; I will purchase a home there, install you in it, with servants in plenty, and then I will go to England, attend to some necessary business, dispose of some of my property and return to New York, where we will live in happiness together."

"Very well; that will please me, father."

"Come, let us go to the village. I suppose you have no wish to go to the encampment?"

"No; I don't want to see the gypsies again."

"Not even Queen Elsie?"

"No; she has never taught me to love her; it will not give me any heart pains to leave her."

"Then come with me."

They were not long in reaching the village, and Royal Ambrose went to a house where he had spent one night, and asked if he could secure accommodations for himself and daughter.

It was an estimable patriot family, and when they had heard the Englishman's story they gave the girl a hearty welcome.

As soon as he had got Madge—or Frances, as we will call her now—installed in the house, he told her to make herself comfortable, while he went to attend to some business. Then he made his way to the home of Enoch Sanderson and told him about finding Frances.

"I came to America to look for a boy, the son of a friend," he said; "the boy is dead, but I have found my daughter, whom I have mourned as dead for many years. Is it not rather strange, when you come to think of it?"



"Yes, so it is," was the reply. "I am glad, Mr. Ambrose. When will you return to England?"

"I don't know when. I shall take my daughter to New York soon and will purchase a home for her; then I will go to England, make my report to Gerald Martison, sell some of my property in and near London, after which I will return and settle down to spend my days in New York."

Sanderson looked surprised.

"Why not take your daughter back with you?" he asked.

"She doesn't want to go."

"What is that? She doesn't want to go?"

"No."

"That is queer; I would have thought that she would have been wild to go."

"That is what I would have thought; but such is not the case. She says she likes America and wishes to stay here."

"But she can have no remembrance of England, so how can she know whether she will like it?"

"She says she knows that she likes America and is determined to stay here."

"I don't know that that is to be wondered at, Royal; she has lived in America since she can remember, and is an American at heart."

"True."

"I know how that is myself; I have lived here till I have lost all desire to ever see England again."

They talked an hour or more, and then Royal Ambrose went back to Tioga.

Frances was feeling very much at home in the house of the patriot family, and was in high spirits when her father got there. She gave him a warm welcome and kissed him.

Ambrose was feeling happy, also; he had found his daughter, and had reason to feel happy.

Madge—to give her her gypsy name—was missed from the encampment when dinnertime came, and Queen Elsie, suspecting that Royal Ambrose had something to do with the girl's disappearance, sent a number of the men to look for her.

One of these went to the village and soon learned that the girl was there quartered in one of the houses, and that she was with a man who claimed to be her father.

He hastened back to the encampment with the news, and when Queen Elsie heard it she was wild with rage.

"He has made up his mind that she is his daughter and has persuaded her to leave me," the woman exclaimed; "but we must get her back, do you hear? She must not be permitted to remain with him. She has been a gypsy all her life, nearly, and a gypsy she must remain."

The man shook his head and looked doubtful.

"I don't see how we kin git her erway frum thar," he said.

"We must do it," determinedly. Then she added: "Send Rollo here."

The man nodded.

"All right," he said, "ef she kin be got I guess thet Rollo will git 'er."

"True," agreed Queen Elsie.

Rollo soon appeared, and was told that Madge had gone away in company with an Englishman who claimed to be her father.

"I want you to go and steal her away and bring her back to the encampment to-night," said the woman; "then we will get away as quickly as possible."

"All right; I'll do et," was the reply; "I'll bring her back."

"See to it that you do."

Then he asked how it had happened that the girl had gone away, and who the man was that claimed to be her father and all about it.

Queen Elsie told him as much as she thought it necessary, and then he went away from the encampment, and was soon at the village.

He slouched around, keeping pretty quiet, but asking such questions as enabled him to find out what he wished to know, which was, what house the girl was in and what would be the best and easiest way of entering it and stealing her away.

"It will be a hard job," he said to himself; "but I'll get her away from there or know the reason why."

He slouched out of the village and back to the encampment and was summoned by Queen Elsie.

"You have been to the village?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Do you think you can get Madge and bring her back?"

"I think so."

"You will have to have help, won't you?"

"Yes; I'll get some of the boys to help me."

Then he went out and talked to five or six of the young gypsies who had been with him when they attacked and captured Dick and left him in the old hollow tree.

The youths said they would help him, and so he felt that all he had to do was to wait till night came; then he would be able to bring Madge back in triumph.

"She thinks she has got away from me," he told himself; "but I'll show her that she hasn't."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE BRITISH FLEE.

The strange story of the finding of his daughter in the person of the gypsy maiden by the Englishman, Royal Ambrose, soon became known throughout the village and the patriot encampment as well.

The soldiers were talking about it that evening, when Dick Slater and Tom Waldron entered the encampment. They had left their three comrades on guard near the British encampment and had come to report to General Sullivan.

When Dick and Tom heard the news they were greatly surprised.

Dick was delighted, for he reasoned that it was a strange



of great good fortune for the girl, but Tom looked glum.

Dick noticed this, and asked:

"What's the matter, Tom?"

"Matter enough, Dick. I have fallen in love with that girl, and now her father will take her back to England with him and I will never see her again."

Dick looked at his comrade searchingly.

"Have you really fallen in love with her?" he asked.

"Yes, and I have been happy in thinking that I would be able to win her, but now that she has turned out to be the daughter of a rich Englishman, it is different; and as I have just said, he will no doubt take her to England right away and I will never see her again."

"I'll tell you what to do," said Dick; "see her at once, tell her you love her and get her to promise to marry you."

"I might do that, Dick, but I'm afraid it won't do much good. Even if she were to promise to marry me her father would make her break her promise, once he got her back in England."

Dick looked thoughtful.

"Perhaps you are right," he said; "well, it will do no harm to do as I have suggested. The girl has lived a wild, free life, and doubtless has a will of her own, and it may be that her father would not be able to get her to break her promise."

Tom looked thoughtful, and then his face brightened a bit.

"Perhaps you are right, Dick," he said; "I will hope so, at least, and will see her this evening and get her promise, if possible. Of course, it is possible that she does not care for me at all."

"You can easily settle that point. Wait till I have made my report to General Sullivan and I will go with you."

"All right."

Dick went to the house occupied by General Sullivan and told him that the British were still on the hill, and that they seemed to have no intention of moving at present.

General Sullivan looked thoughtfully at Dick, and then said:

"It would seem that they are waiting for reinforcements. It is my belief that they are expecting to be joined by other forces—possibly by Tories and Indians."

"Don't you think it would be a good plan to attack them before they are reinforced, sir?" asked Dick.

"I would do so if they were not occupying such a strong position. They could give us a very hard fight and could cause great havoc in our ranks. This I wish to avoid, if possible."

They talked awhile longer, and then Dick took his departure.

He went back to where the Liberty Boys were encamped and told Tom Waldron he was ready to go and call on the ex-gypsy maiden. Of course, Tom was eager

to go, and they went to the house where Royal Ambrose and his daughter had secured quarters.

The girl was glad to see the youths. Especially was she glad to see Tom, but, girl-like, she concealed this fact quite successfully, and pretended to be more pleased to see Dick than to see his companion.

Dick congratulated her on her good fortune in finding a father, and a wealthy one at that, and asked her if she were going to accompany him to England right away.

"I am not going to England at all," was the reply.

Tom Waldron started and his face lighted up, while he came very near giving utterance to an exclamation of joy. Frances was watching Tom, and when she saw the look that came over his face she was delighted, though she was careful not to let the fact show on her face.

"He loves me!" she told herself; "oh, I am so glad!"

Dick, in order to help his comrade out and secure for him information that he was undoubtedly eager to secure, asked:

"Why are you not going to England?"

"Because I like America," was the reply.

"Ah, so that is the reason, is it?"

"Yes; I have lived here ever since I can remember, and I don't want to go to a strange country and start all over again."

"I don't blame you," said Dick; "I am glad that you are going to stay in America; but I would not have thought that your father would have been willing to settle here."

"He wanted me to go to England, but when he saw that I did not wish to do so, he said that we would live in New York."

"Ah, you are going to live there, then?"

"Yes; father said he could not live away out here in this wild country, but that he could be very well satisfied in New York City, and that suits me very well."

Dick knew that this would suit Tom, for that youth's parents lived only about ten miles from the city, and he would be able to go and see the girl after the war was over and he was back at his home.

"I guess it will work out all right," Dick thought; then he said he had some work to do, and excused himself and left, Tom remaining.

He was determined to find out how he was regarded by the ex-gypsy maiden, if such a thing was possible.

He took up the conversation as soon as Dick was gone and was soon conversing pleasantly and animatedly. He was a good talker and the girl liked to hear him talk, so they enjoyed themselves very much. At last Tom got his courage worked up to the sticking point, and told Frances that he loved her and asked her to marry him. She made him happy by saying that she loved him in return and would marry him, and he went back to the Liberty Boys' quarters the happiest youth in New York State.

He told Dick that it was all right; that he had asked Frances to marry him and that she had consented, the marriage to take place as soon as the war was ended.



"I congratulate you, Tom," said Dick; "I think you have won a good girl, and that she will make you happy."

"I am sure of it, Dick."

The other youths all congratulated Tom, for they knew of his love for the ex-gypsy maiden.

It was now dark, and Dick and Tom took their departure. They made their way back to the vicinity of the British encampment, and found their three comrades on guard.

"Everything is quiet," Bob reported; "the British are still there, and I don't think they have any intention of moving."

"General Sullivan is sure they are waiting for reinforcements, Bob," said Dick.

"I think it likely."

"Well, so are we, and there is a chance that ours may get here first; in that case we will make an attack on the redcoats."

"I wish our other force would hurry up," said Bob; "I'd like to make an attack on the British; I guess they think we are afraid of them, and I would like to prove to them that we are not."

"We will get the chance, I think."

"I hope so."

About midnight the youths discovered that the British were stirring. They were evidently getting ready to break camp and march away.

"You boys watch them," said Dick; "I'll hasten to Tioga and carry the news to General Sullivan."

He hurried away, and half an hour later was in the patriot encampment.

He found it in a state of confusion and excitement. The other force, under General Clinton, had just arrived.

General Sullivan was up and was talking to General Clinton when Dick put in an appearance.

"The British are breaking camp and getting ready to march, sir!" said Dick, after saluting.

"Say you so?" cried General Sullivan; "then we must break camp also and get after them. We must not let them get away from us, now that our own reinforcements have arrived."

He at once gave the necessary orders, and soon the soldiers were busily engaged in getting ready to march.

An hour later the combined forces marched away, and three-quarters of an hour afterward were in the vicinity of the hill that had been occupied by the British.

Bob Estabrook and his three companions stated that the British had been gone an hour, at least.

"Then we must get after them!" said General Sullivan.

The army marched away in the direction in which Bob said the enemy had gone, and the march was kept up till morning, but the redcoats had not been overtaken.

At daylight the army came to a stop and cooked and ate breakfast. The soldiers were very tired, and it was decided to rest an hour.

Dick and Bob were sent ahead to see if they could see the enemy.

"We wish to be sure that we are on their track," said General Sullivan.

The youths made their way forward, and half an hour later caught sight of the British. The redcoats had just broken camp and were resuming the march.

The youths hastened back to the patriot encampment.

"We are on their track," Dick reported to the general, and he told where the redcoats had been seen.

The patriot army broke camp at once, then, and resumed the march.

A stern chase is always a long chase, it is said, and it proved to be the case this time. Three days passed, and still the patriot soldiers had been unable to catch up with the enemy.

"We will catch them sooner or later," said General Sullivan, confidently, and General Clinton coincided in this view of the matter.

"Yes, we should be able to catch them," he said; "and when we do, we will have them at our mercy, for we outnumber them five to one."

"Yes, they would soon have to surrender," General Sullivan agreed.

"They understand that," said Dick; "that is the reason they have been marching so swiftly."

Then the general told Dick to go on ahead and keep a sharp watch on the enemy.

"We are getting into a part of the country that has been infested by Tories and Indians, under Johnson, the Butlers and Brant, the Indian chief," he said; "and the British are likely to be reinforced at almost any time. If that should occur we would have a hard fight on our hands, no doubt."

Dick saluted and withdrew, and a few minutes later he and Bob hastened on ahead to keep a sharp lookout, as he had been told to do by General Sullivan.

An hour later they came in sight of the enemy.

The British had come to a stop, and when the two patriot spies got close enough to see what was going on they made a discovery.

Hundreds of Tories and Indians were there with the British and Hessian soldiers.

The enemy had been reinforced.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH.

"Just look at the Tories and Indians, Dick!"

"There are a lot of them, Bob."

"I should say so."

"Yes, we have lost our opportunity of capturing the entire British force; we did not catch up with it soon enough."

"That's so; well, there will be a fight, anyway, and there is something."



"True; I would rather fight than to have to keep marching the way we have been doing."

"So would I. Well, shall we go back and tell General Sullivan the news?"

"Yes; but first we must size up the enemy and find out, approximately, at least, how strong it is."

They stole forward, but used extreme care in doing so, for they realized that there was danger of being discovered by the Indians.

Finally, after a long spell of hard work in worming themselves along, they got close enough so that they could size up the enemy.

They already knew how many British and Hessians there were, and all that was necessary was for them to estimate the number of Tories and Indians.

This was rather a difficult matter, but they finally succeeded in accomplishing it to their satisfaction.

They watched the enemy closely, and after awhile decided that the British and their allies were making preparations to show fight.

The point where the enemy was encamped was not far from the village of Newtown, and it was a very good place for a battle.

When they had finished their work Dick and Bob stole away, exercising great care in doing so, for they were well aware that there was danger that the keen-eyed redskins might see them.

They were successful in escaping observation, however, and when they were at a safe distance they hastened their footsteps. Half an hour later they were with the patriot army and had told Generals Sullivan and Clinton the news.

"So the British have been reinforced by the Tories and Indians, eh?" remarked Sullivan; "and they are going to show fight? Very well, we will give them all the fighting they want."

There were about fifteen hundred Tories and Indians, Dick and Bob estimated, and even with this number to reinforce them the British and Hessians were outnumbered more than two to one, so the patriots felt that they would be able to triumph over the enemy.

It would not do to go at the affair rashly, however; it would be necessary to exercise caution, and General Sullivan ordered that a skirmish line be thrown out as they advanced, so as to make it impossible for the British to take him by surprise.

The enemy had chosen its position and was sticking there, however, and when the patriot army got close enough to observe anything it was seen that breastworks were being thrown up and preparations for defense were being made.

Preparations were made to attack the enemy, and when all was ready the attack was made.

It was quite a fierce battle, but the one thousand British, with their Tory and Indian allies, were not a match for their patriot foe.

They were soon forced to beat a retreat, having lost a

large number, while the patriot loss was light, comparatively speaking.

The Tories and Indians were scattered to the four winds, and the latter did not go back to the British army at all. The Tories headed westward toward their headquarters at Fort Niagara.

The British retreated toward the north and managed to keep out of the way, though Sullivan chased them quite awhile.

"I guess we have done as well as could be expected," General Sullivan said to his brother general that evening when they had gone into camp. "We have thrashed the redcoats, Tories and Indians and sent them flying."

They talked of the victory awhile and then General Clinton asked:

"What are we going to do next, General Sullivan?"

"I shall follow orders, General Clinton, and they are to the effect that we do the Indians as much damage as possible. We are to destroy their crops, burn their villages and make them wish they had remained neutral and kept out of the affair altogether."

"That will serve them right."

This was done. For more than a week the patriot army moved hither and thither, burning Indian villages, destroying crops and causing the redskins all the trouble possible. Everywhere the army went it left a scene of devastation.

Then the patriot army found itself back at Tioga, where it went into camp for the night, it having arrived there in the evening.

As may be supposed, Tom Waldron was eager to learn what had become of his sweetheart, and he went at once to the house where she had been staying when the army left there nearly two weeks before.

He was agreeably surprised to find her there.

"I did not want to go away without seeing you again," she told Tom, and this pleased him greatly.

"You are a dear little sweetheart!" he said; "I am glad you stayed, for I wanted to see you again before you left this part of the country."

"I wanted to tell you about an adventure I had the night your army left here," said Frances.

"What happened?" he asked.

"Some of my old gypsy companions tried to steal me away and take me back to the encampment."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes; I think that Queen Elsie was at the bottom of the attempt."

"Quite likely; where are the gypsies now?"

"They are still lurking in the vicinity."

"Waiting for a chance to get you and take you away with them, I suppose."

"Yes; that is what father thinks, and he is afraid to start away, for fear they will lie in wait and capture me."

"Why not go back with our army?"

"That would be just what we would like to do; but is your army going back?"



"Yes."

"I will speak to father about it; I am sure he will want to accompany you."

Mr. Ambrose came in presently and was introduced to Tom. He had not made the youth's acquaintance before the army went away, and naturally he was rather eager to see what sort of young fellow his daughter had taken a liking to.

He talked very pleasantly to Tom, and when he learned that the army was to march back toward New York at an early date, he said at once that he and Frances would go along.

Mr. Ambrose left the two young folk together presently, and they talked long and earnestly on topics dear to the hearts of young people under such circumstances. Their conversation would not interest the reader, so we will simply say that Tom returned to the encampment looking happy.

"So she is still here, Tom?" remarked Dick, smilingly.

"Yes," was the reply; "but they are going to accompany us when we start back."

"Why haven't they gone sooner?"

"They were afraid to do so on account of the gypsies."

"How is that?"

"The gypsies tried to kidnap Frances with the evident intention of carrying her back to their camp and taking her away," said Tom, and then he explained the affair.

"Well, it would have been dangerous for them to start back without an escort," said Dick; "Queen Elsie would like to get the girl back, and I would not put it past the gypsies to murder Mr. Ambrose if they got the chance."

"Some of those swarthy-faced rascals are capable of murder, I am sure," said Mark Morrison.

"Yes, indeed," from Dick.

They talked awhile longer, and then Dick's face lighted up, and he said:

"I have an idea, boys. You remember, I told you that when we were coming to this vicinity I was captured by a gypsy youth named Rollo and taken by him and his companions, six or seven in number, and placed, bound hand and foot, in an old hollow tree and left there to starve?"

"Yes, we remember it," said Mark Morrison.

"Well, I haven't got even with the young rascals for that, and I would like to settle the score, so what do you say to going to the gypsy camp and attending to the matter?"

"Just the thing!" cried Bob; "what shall we do with them, give them a good thrashing?"

"Yes—with good, big switches."

"Hurrah! That is just the thing to do," from Bob; "let's go at once!"

The youths set out. All went, for they were eager to see the affair, even though all could not take a hand in it.

The gypsy encampment was soon reached and the Liberty Boys surrounded it to keep the youths they were after from making their escape.

Dick then went to Queen Elsie and told her that he and his comrades had come there to settle with Rollo and seven other youths, and that it would go hard with any of the men if they attempted to interfere.

The queen of the gypsies saw it would be useless to try to resist, and so she gave the order that the men remain quiet and make no hostile demonstration.

Dick had a good memory for faces, and he had no difficulty in picking out Rollo and the young gypsies who had been with him the time they captured him and left him in the hollow tree. As soon as this had been done Rollo and his comrades were given sound thrashings with big, tough switches, and they howled like they were being killed. Indeed the pain must have been considerable, for the youths who wielded the switches laid them on lustily.

When this had been done he told the queen that it would be well for her to break camp and get away from that part of the country, and the advice was taken, for the youths had not reached their own encampment before the gypsies were on the move.

When Tom Waldron told Frances about the affair next day she was delighted.

"I'm glad that you did give Rollo a thrashing," she said; "I hate him, and he bothered me so much with his unwelcome attentions that it gives me pleasure to know that he got a whipping."

Two days later the patriot army marched away toward the east, and Mr. Ambrose and his daughter accompanied it.

The patriot army did not go clear to New York City, but Tom Waldron and three comrades accompanied the two to the city as an escort, returning to the army as soon as they saw Mr. Ambrose and Frances safely quartered there.

Mr. Ambrose bought a fine residence in New York, installed Frances therein, and then went back to England and transacted his business, after which he came back to America and settled down to stay during the rest of his life.

When the war ended Tom Waldron and Frances Ambrose were married, and they were very happy.

Thus ends the story of "The Liberty Boys and the Gypsies."

THE END.

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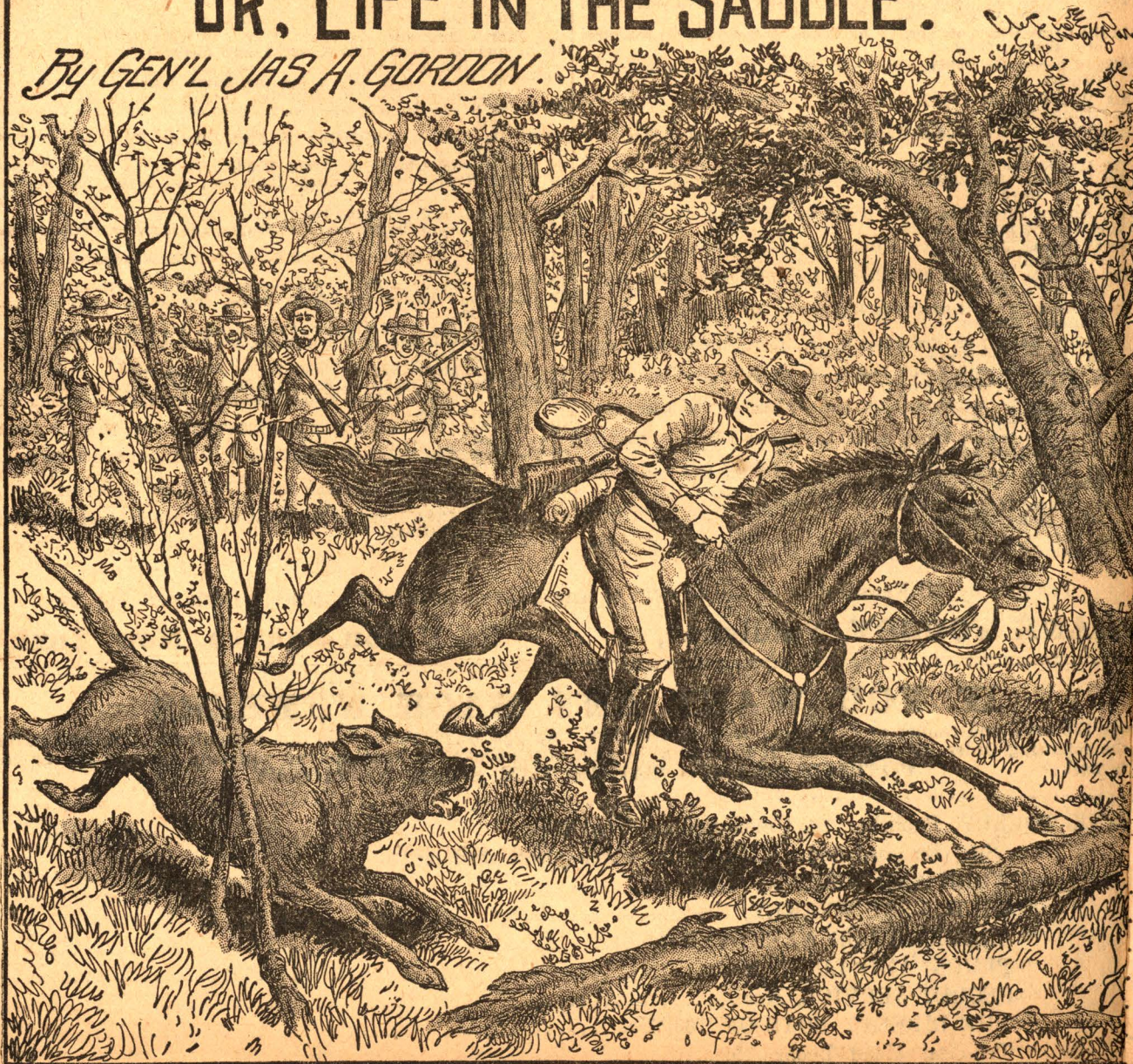
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